FAMOUS HOUSES AND LITERARY SHRINES OF LONDON

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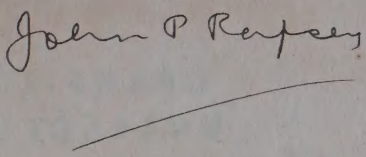

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FAMOUS HOUSES
AND
LITERARY SHRINES OF LONDON

DR. JOHNSON IN HIS TRAVELLING DRESS AS DESCRIBED IN BOSWELL'S "TOUR OF THE HEBRIDES"

Drawn from life and engraved by T. Trotter, from the Print Room of the British Museum.

FAMOUS HOUSES
and
LITERARY SHRINES
OF LONDON

By

A. ST. JOHN ADCOCK

WITH FIFTY-NINE ILLUSTRATIONS
BY FREDERICK ADCOCK

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PREFATORY NOTE

NOTHING could well be deader or emptier than an unoccupied house of whose former inhabitants we have no knowledge; and it is impossible to take a real interest in a house now occupied by strangers, even though it was aforetime the residence of some famous man, unless we are acquainted with that man's personality, and know what he thought and did and said whilst he was living there. I have attempted to do little more than supply that information here as the complement of my brother's drawings, and to this end have been less concerned to give my own descriptions and opinions than to bring together opinions and descriptions that were written by such famous residents themselves or by guests and visitors who saw and knew them. As far as possible I have quoted from contemporary Diaries and Memoirs, especially from letters that were written in or to these houses, or from Journals that their tenants kept whilst they dwelt there, supplementing all this with a narrative of incidents and events that might help to recreate the life and recapture the atmosphere that belonged to such places in the days that have made them memorable. Whenever I have adventured into

any general biography, or expressed any personal opinion, it has been merely with the object of adding so much of history and character as would serve to fill in the outline of a man's portrait, give it a sufficient fulness and colour of life, and throw into clear relief the space of time that he passed in some particular house that can still be seen in a London street.

I think I have throughout made due acknowledgment to the authors of various volumes of *Recollections* and *Table Talk* from which I have drawn anecdotes and pen-portraits, and I should like to mention at the outset that for biographical facts and much else I have been particularly indebted to such books as Elwin and Courthope's edition of the *Poems and Letters of Pope ;* Austin Dobson's *William Hogarth*, and H. B. Wheatley's *Hogarth's London ;* Boswell's *Johnson*, of course, and Forster's *Lives of Goldsmith* and of *Dickens ;* Gilchrist's *Life of Blake ;* Leslie's and Holmes's *Lives of Constable ;* Arthur B. Chamberlain's *George Romney ;* Lord Houghton's *Life and Letters of Keats*, and Buxton Forman's *Complete Works of John Keats ;* Leigh Hunt's *Autobiography ;* De Quincey's *English Opium Eater ;* Hogg's and Peacock's *Memoirs of Shelley ;* Carew Hazlitt's *Memoirs of Hazlitt ;* Blackman's *Life of Day ;* Byron's *Journals and Letters*, and Lewis Bettany's useful compilation from them, *The Confessions of Lord Byron ;* Lockhart's *Life of Scott*, and Scott's *Journal ;* Talfourd's and Ainger's *Lives of Lamb*, and Lamb's *Letters ;* Walter Jerrold's

Life of Thomas Hood; Cross's *Life of George Eliot;* Sir William Armstrong's *Life of Turner*, and Lewis Hind's *Turner's Golden Visions;* Joseph Knight's *Rossetti;* Froude's *Thomas Carlyle*, and W. H. Wylie's *Carlyle, The Man and His Books;* Allingham's *Diary;* E. R. and J. Pennell's *Life of Whistler;* Trollope's *Thackeray*, and Lady Thackeray Ritchie's prefaces to the Centenary Edition of Thackeray's works.

A. St. J. A.

1912.

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St Saviours.
Southwark Cathedral.
FA

FAMOUS LONDON HOUSES

CHAPTER I

SOME CELEBRATED COCKNEYS

You cannot stir the ground of London anywhere but straightway it flowers into romance. Read the inscriptions on the crumbling tombs of our early merchant princes and adventurers in some of the old City churches, and it glimmers upon you that if ever the history of London's commercial rise and progress gets adequately written it will read like a series of stories out of the *Arabian Nights*. Think what dashing and magnificent figures, what tales of dark plottings, fierce warfare, and glorious heroisms must brighten and darken the pages of any political history of London; and even more glamorous, more intensely and humanly alive, would be a social history of London, beginning perhaps in those days of the fourteenth century when Langland was living in Cornhill and writing his *Vision of Piers Plowman*, or farther back still, in Richard the First's time, when that fine spirit, the first of English demagogues, William Fitzosbert, was haranguing the folkmoot in St. Paul's Churchyard, urging them to resist the tyrannic taxations of the Lord Mayor and his Court of wealthy Aldermen

—a passion for justice that brought him into such danger that he and certain of his friends had to seek sanctuary, and barricaded themselves in Bow Church. The church was fired by order of a bishop who had no sympathy with reformers, and Fitzosbert and his friends, breaking out through the flames, were stabbed and struck down in Cheapside, hustled to the Tower, hastily tried and sentenced, dragged out by the heels through the streets, and hanged at Smithfield. I have always thought this would make a good, live starting-point, and had I but world enough and time I would sooner write that history than anything else.

No need to hunt after topics when you are writing about London; they come to you. The air is full of them. The very names of the streets are cabalistic words. Once you know London, myriads of great spirits may be called from the vasty deep by sight or sound of such names as Fleet Street, Strand, Whitehall, Drury Lane, The Temple, Newgate Street, Aldersgate, Lombard Street, Cloth Fair, Paternoster Row, Holborn, Bishopsgate, and a hundred others. You have only to walk into Whitefriars Street and see "Hanging-sword Alley" inscribed on the wall of a court at the top of a narrow flight of steps, and all Alsatia rises again around you, as Ilion rose like a mist to the music of Apollo's playing. Loiter along Cornhill in the right mood and Thomas Archer's house shall rebuild itself for you at the corner of Pope's Head Alley, where he started the first English newspaper in 1603, and you will wonder why nobody writes a full history of London journalism.

As for literary London—every other street you traverse is haunted with memories of poets, novelists

and men of letters, and it is some of the obscurest of these associations that are the most curiously fascinating. I have a vivid, youthful remembrance of a tumble-down, red-tiled shop near the end of Leathersellers' Buildings which I satisfied myself was the identical place in which Robert Bloomfield worked as a shoemaker's assistant; Devereux Court still retains something of the Grecian Coffee-house that used to be frequented by Addison and Steele, but I knew the Court first, and am still drawn to it most, as the site of that vanished Tom's Coffee-house where Akenside often spent his winter evenings; and if I had my choice of bringing visibly back out of nothingness one of the old Charing Cross houses, it would be the butcher's shop that was kept by the uncle who adopted Prior in his boyhood.

Plenty of unpleasant things have been said about London, but never by her own children, or such children of her adoption as Johnson and Dickens. Says Hobbes, who was born at Malmesbury, "London has a great belly, but no palate," and Bishop Stubbs (a native of Knaresborough) more recently described it as "always the purse, seldom the head, and never the heart of England." Later still an eminent speaker, quoting this fantastic dictum of Stubbs's, went a step further and informed his audience that "not many men eminent in literature have been born in London"; a statement so demonstrably inaccurate that one may safely undertake to show that at least as many men eminent in literature, to say nothing of art and science, have been born in London as in any other half-dozen towns of the kingdom put together.

To begin with, the morning star of our literature,

Geoffrey Chaucer, was born in Thames Street, not far from the wharf where, after he was married and had leased a home for himself in Aldgate, he held office as a Comptroller of Customs, and the pen that was presently to write the *Canterbury Tales* "moved over bills of lading." The "poets' poet," Spenser, was born in East Smithfield, by the Tower, and in his *Prothalamion* speaks of his birthplace affectionately as—

> "Merry London, my most kindly nurse,
> That to me gave this life's first native source,
> Though from another place I take my name."

Ben Jonson was born in Hartshorn Lane, Charing Cross; four of his contemporary dramatists, Fletcher, Webster, Shirley and Middleton, were also Londoners by birth; Sir Thomas Browne, author of the *Religio Medici*, was born in the parish of St. Michael-le-Quern, in the very heart of the city; and Bread Street, Cheapside, is hallowed by the fact that Milton had his birth there.

Dr. Donne, the son of a London merchant, was also born within a stone's throw of Cheapside; and his disciple, Cowley, came into the world in Fleet Street, at the corner of Chancery Lane. But Cowley was a renegade; he acquired an unnatural preference for the country, and not only held that "God the first garden made, and the first city Cain," but ended a poem in praise of nature and a quiet life with—

> "Methinks I see
> The monster London laugh at me;
> I should at thee too, foolish city,
> If it were fit to laugh at misery;
> But thy estate I pity.

Let but thy wicked men from out thee go,
And all the fools that crowd thee so,
Even thou, who dost thy millions boast,
A village less than Islington wilt grow,
A solitude almost."

The daintiest of our lyrists, Herrick, was born over his father's shop in Cheapside, and you may take it he was only playing with poetical fancies when, in some lines to his friend Endymion Porter, he praised the country with its "nut-brown mirth and russet wit," and again when, in a set of verses on "The Country Life," he assured his brother he was "thrice and above blest," because he could—

"Leave the city, for exchange, to see
The country's sweet simplicity."

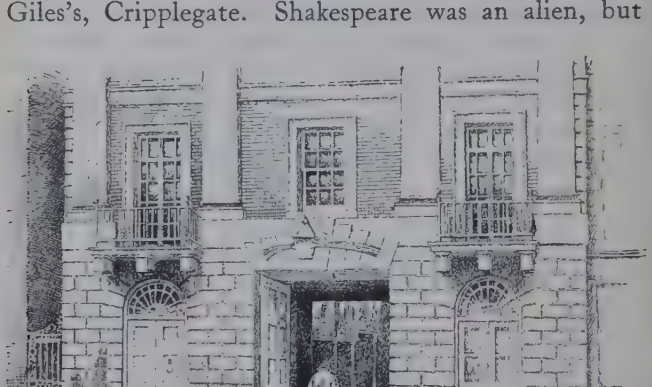
If you want to find him in earnest, turn to that enraptured outburst of his on "His Return to London"—

"Ravished in spirit I come, nay more I fly
To thee, blessed place of my nativity! . . .
O place! O people! manners framed to please
All nations, customs, kindreds, languages!
I am a free-born Roman; suffer then
That I amongst you live a citizen.
London my home is, though by hard fate sent
Into a long and irksome banishment;
Yet since called back, henceforward let me be,
O native country! repossessed by thee;
For rather than I'll to the West return,
I'll beg of thee first here to have mine urn."

There speaks the true Cockney; he would sooner be dead in London than alive in the West of England.

Even Lamb's love of London was scarcely greater than that.

It was fitting that Pope, essentially a town poet, should be born in Lombard Street. In the next thoroughfare, Cornhill, Gray was born; and, son of a butcher, Defoe began life in the parish of St. Giles's, Cripplegate. Shakespeare was an alien, but



THE GATEWAY
MIDDLE TEMPLE
F A

Bacon was born at York House, in the Strand; which, to my thinking, is the strongest argument in favour of the theory that he wrote the plays. Churchill was born at Vine Street, Westminster; Keats in Moorfields; and, staunchest and one of the most incorrigible Londoners of them all, Charles Lamb in Crown Office Row, Temple. He refers, in one of his essays, to Hare Court, in the Temple, and says:

"It was a gloomy, churchyard-like court, with three trees and a pump in it. I was born near it, and used to drink at that pump when I was a Rechabite of six years old." The pump is no longer there, only one half of Hare Court remains as it was in Lamb's day, and Crown Office Row has been rebuilt. His homes in Mitre Court Buildings and Inner Temple Lane have vanished also; but the Temple is still rich in reminiscences of him. Paper Buildings, King's Bench Walk, Harcourt Buildings, the fountain near Garden Court, the old Elizabethan Hall, in which tradition says Shakespeare read one of his plays to Queen Elizabeth—these and the church, the gardens, the winding lanes and quaint byways of the Temple, made up, as he said, his earliest recollections. "I repeat to this day," he writes, "no verses to myself more frequently, or with kindlier emotion, than those of Spenser, where he speaks of this spot—

> 'There when they came whereas those bricky towers
> The which on Themmes broad aged back doth ride,
> Where now the studious lawyers have their bowers,
> There whylome wont the Templar knights to bide,
> Till they decayed through pride.'"

And, "indeed," he adds, "it is the most elegant spot in the metropolis."

But his letters and essays are full of his love of London. "I don't care much," he wrote to Wordsworth, "if I never see a mountain. I have passed all my days in London, until I have formed as many and intense local attachments as any of your mountaineers can have done with dead Nature. . . . I often shed tears in the motley Strand from fulness of

joy in so much life." Again, "Fleet Street and the Strand," he writes to Manning, "are better places to live in for good and all than amidst Skiddaw." After he had removed to Edmonton, on account of his sister's health, it was to Wordsworth he wrote, saying how he pined to be back again in London: "In dreams I am in Fleet Market, but I wake and cry to sleep again. . . . Oh, never let the lying poets be believed who 'tice men from the cheerful haunts of streets. . . . A garden was the primitive prison, till man, with Promethean felicity and boldness, luckily sinned himself out of it. Thence followed Babylon, Nineveh, Venice, London. . . . I would live in London shirtless, bookless."

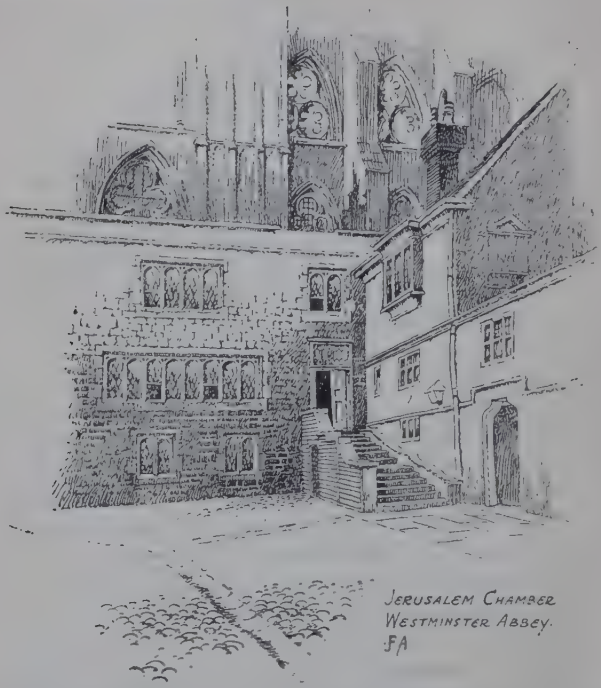
But to get back to our catalogue of birthplaces—Blake was born in Broad Street, near Golden Square; Byron in Holles Street; Hood in the Poultry, within sight of the Mansion House; Dante and Christina Rossetti were Londoners born; so were Swinburne, Browning, Philip Bourke Marston, John Stuart Mill, Ruskin, Turner, Holman Hunt, Sir Arthur Sullivan—but if we go outside literary Londoners this chapter will end only with the book. Moreover, my purpose is not so much to talk of authors and artists who were born in London, as to give some record of the still surviving houses in which many of them lived; whether they had their birth here or not, the majority of them came here to live and work, for, so far as England is concerned, there is more than a grain of truth in Lamb's enthusiastic boast that "London is the only fostering soil of genius."

CHAPTER II

SHAKESPEARE IN LONDON

THE London that Shakespeare knew has vanished like a dream. The Great Fire swept most of it out of existence in a few days of 1666, and the two and a half centuries of time since then have made away with nearly all the rest of it. The Tower still remains; there are parts of the Temple; a stray relic or so, such as the London Stone in Cannon Street, by which Shakespeare lays one of the Jack Cade scenes of his *Henry VI*. There are the stately water-gates along the Embankment, too; here and there an old house or so, such as that above the Inner Temple gateway, those of Staple Inn, those in Cloth Fair, and over in the Borough High Street; a few ancient Inns, like the Mitre off Ely Place, the Dick Whittington in Cloth Fair, the George in Southwark; some dozen of churches, including Westminster Abbey (in whose Jerusalem Chamber the translators of the Bible held their meetings), St. Saviour's, Southwark, St. Bartholomew the Great in Smithfield, St. Andrew Undershaft, St. Ethelburga's and St. Helen's, Bishopsgate, in which latter parish it seems probable that Shakespeare was for a while a householder; otherwise Elizabethan London has dwindled to little but remembered sites of once-famous buildings and streets that have changed in everything but their names.

Until quite recently none of us knew of any address in London that had ever been Shakespeare's; we knew of no house, of no street even, which had once



JERUSALEM CHAMBER
WESTMINSTER ABBEY.
FA

numbered him among its tenants, though we know that he passed at least twenty of the busiest and most momentous years of his life in the metropolis. There is a plausible but vague tradition that during some part of that period he had lodgings in Southwark

near the Globe Theatre, in which he acted, for which he wrote plays, and of which he was one of the proprietors. There used to be an inscription: "Here lived William Shakespeare," on the face of an old gabled house in Aldersgate Street, but there was never a rag of evidence to support the statement. We have no letters of Shakespeare, but we have one or two that refer to him, and one written to him by Richard Quiney, and I think we may infer from this latter that Shakespeare occasionally visited Quiney, who was a vintner, dwelling at the sign of the Bell in Carter Lane. Otherwise, except for a handful of small-beer chronicles about him that were picked up in theatrical circles two or three generations after his death, we had no record of any incident in his London life that brought us into actual personal touch with him until little more than two years ago. Then an American professor, Mr. Charles William Wallace, came over and did what our English students do not appear to have had the energy or enterprise to do for themselves—he toiled carefully through the dusty piles of documents preserved in the Record Office, and succeeded in unearthing one of the most interesting Shakespearian discoveries that have ever been made—a discovery that gives us vividly intimate glimpses of Shakespeare's life in London, and establishes beyond question his place of residence here in the years when he was writing some of the greatest of his dramas.

In 1587 the company of the "Queen's Players" made their first appearance in Stratford-on-Avon, and it was about this date, so far as can be traced, that Shakespeare ran away from home; so you may reasonably play with a fancy that he joined this com-

pany in some very minor capacity and travelled with them to London. At this time, Burbage, who was by profession an actor and by trade a carpenter and joiner, was owner and manager of "The Theatre," which stood in Shoreditch near the site of the present Standard Theatre, and close by was a rival house, "The Curtain" (commemorated nowadays by Curtain Road); and according to the legend, which has developed into a legend of exact detail, yet rests on nothing but the airiest rumour, it was outside one or both of these theatres Shakespeare picked up a living on his arrival in London by minding horses whilst their owners were inside witnessing a performance.

By 1593 Shakespeare had become known as an actor and as a dramatist. He had revised and tinkered at various plays for Burbage's company, and as a consequence had been charged with plagiarism by poor Greene, whose *Groatsworth of Wit* (published after he had died miserably in Dowgate) pours scorn on the "upstart crow, beautified with our feathers, that with his *Tygers heart wrapt in a players hide* supposes he is as well able to bumbast out a blank verse as the best of you; and being an absolute *Johannes fac totum*, is in his own conceit the only Shake-scene in a countrie." For his acting, Shakespeare appears for the first time in the Lord Chamberlain's accounts of 1594 as having taken equal shares with William Kemp and Richard Burbage in a sum of twenty pounds "for two severall Comedies or Interludes shewed by them" before Queen Elizabeth at Christmas 1593.

After the Theatre of Shoreditch was pulled down in 1598, Burbage built the Globe Theatre on Bank-

side, Southwark, on the ground of which part of Barclay & Perkins's brewery now stands; and Shakespeare, "being a deserveing man," was taken as one of the partners and received a "chief-actor's share" of the profits. And it is to this prosperous period of his London career that Professor Wallace's recent discoveries belong.

In 1598 there lived in a shop at the corner of Silver Street and Monkwell Street a certain Christopher Mountjoy, a maker of wigs and fashionable headdresses. He was a Frenchman, born at Cressy, and probably a refugee Huguenot. His household consisted of a wife and daughter, an apprentice named Stephen Bellott, and one lodger, and this lodger was William Shakespeare. Being out of his apprenticeship in 1604, Stephen had six pounds from his master and, with this and his own savings, went travelling into Spain, but returned towards the end of the year and resumed work again at Mountjoy's shop. In his 'prentice days Stephen seems to have formed some shy attachment to his master's daughter, Mary, but because of his lack of means and prospects, or because he was naturally reticent, he had made no attempt to press his suit, and Madame Mountjoy, seeing how the young people were affected to each other, followed the fashion of the time and persuaded Shakespeare, who had then been living under the same roof with them for six years, to act as match-maker between her and the hesitating lover. She one day laid the case before Shakespeare and asked his good offices, as Professor Wallace has it; she told him that "if he could bring the young man to make a proposal of marriage, a dower fitting to their station should be

settled upon them at marriage. This was the sum of fifty pounds in money of that time, or approximately four hundred pounds in money of to-day." Shakespeare consented to undertake this delicate duty; he spoke with young Bellott, and the outcome of his negotiations was that Stephen and Mary were married, as the entry in the church register shows, at St. Olave, Silver Street, on the 19th November 1604.

On the death of Madame Mountjoy in 1606, Stephen and his wife went back to live with the father and help him in his business, but they soon fell out with him, and became on such bad terms that some six months later they left him and took lodgings with George Wilkins, a victualler, who kept an inn in the parish of St. Sepulchre's. The quarrel between them culminated in Stephen Bellott bringing an action in the Court of Requests in 1612, to recover from his father-in-law a promised dower of sixty pounds and to ensure that Mountjoy carried out an alleged arrangement to bequeath a sum of two hundred pounds to him by his will. At the Record Office Professor Wallace found all the legal documents relating to these proceedings, and amongst them are the depositions of Shakespeare setting forth to the best of his recollection his own share in the arranging of the marriage. From these depositions, and from those of other witnesses who make reference to him, one gets the first clear and authentic revelation of Shakespeare's home life in London.

He lived with the Mountjoys over that shop at the corner of Monkwell Street for at least six years, down to the date of the wedding, and there is little doubt that he stayed on with them after that. It is more

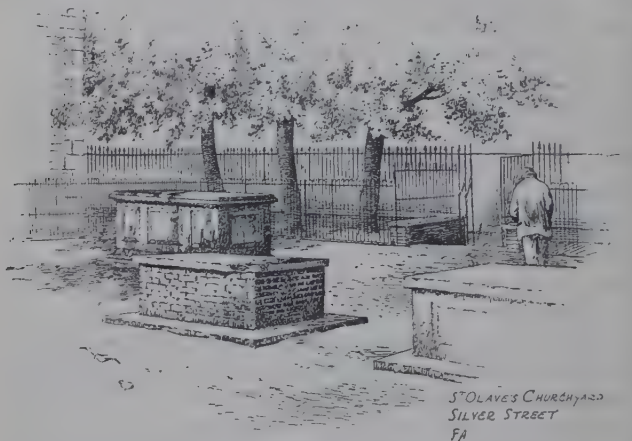
than likely, indeed, that he was still boarding there when he appeared as a witness in the 1612 lawsuit and stated that he had been intimate with the family some "ten years, more or less." Throughout the later of those years he was absent on occasional visits to Stratford, and hitherto it has been generally assumed (on the negative evidence that no trace of him could be found after this date) that he returned and settled down in Stratford permanently about 1609.

Taking only the six years we are certain of, however, he wrote between 1598 and 1604 *Henry V.*, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *As You Like It*, *Twelfth Night*, *All's Well that Ends Well*, *Julius Cæsar*, *Hamlet*, *Measure for Measure*, *and Othello*. In the two years following, whilst it is pretty sure he was still dwelling with the Mountjoys, he wrote *Macbeth* and *King Lear*, and the fact that he had his home here during the period in which he was writing ten of his plays—three of them amongst the greatest he or any man ever wrote—makes this corner of Monkwell Street the most glorious literary landmark in the world.

The house in which he lodged was destroyed by the Great Fire, and the site is occupied now by an old tavern, "The Cooper's Arms." Almost facing it, just the other side of Silver Street, is a fragment of the churchyard of St. Olave's. The church, in which the apprentice Stephen was married to Mary Mountjoy, vanished also in the Great Fire and was not rebuilt, and this weedy remnant of the churchyard with its three or four crumbling tombs is all that survives of the street as Shakespeare knew it; his glance must have rested on that forlorn garden of

the dead as often as he looked from the windows opposite or came out at Mountjoy's door.

Turning to the right when he came out at that door, half a minute's walk up Falcon Street would have brought him into Aldersgate Street, so the announcement on one of the shops there that he had lived in it may have been nothing worse than a per-



ST OLAVE'S CHURCHYARD
SILVER STREET
F.A

fectly honest mistake; it was known as a fact that he lived thereabouts, and tradition settled on the wrong house instead of on the right one, that was a hundred yards or so away from it. But when Shakespeare issued from Mountjoy's shop you may depend that his feet more frequently trod the ground in the opposite direction; he would go to the left, along Silver Street, into Wood Street, and down the length of that to Cheapside, where, almost fronting the end of Wood

Street, stood the Mermaid Tavern, and he must needs pass to the right or left of it, by way of Friday Street, or Bread Street, across Cannon Street and then down Huggin Lane or Little Bread Street Hill to Thames Street, whence, from Queenhithe, Puddle Wharf, or Paul's Wharf, he could take boat over the Thames to the Globe Theatre on Bankside.

There has been no theatre on Bankside these many years; there is nothing there or in that vicinity now that belongs to Shakespeare's age except some scattered, ancient, inglorious houses that he may or may not have known and the stately cathedral of St. Saviour. This holds still the span of ground that has belonged to it since before Chaucer's day. You may enter and see there the quaint effigy of Chaucer's contemporary, Gower, sleeping on his five-century-old tomb; and here and there about the aisles and in the nave are memorials of remembered or forgotten men and women who died while Shakespeare was living, and somewhere in it were buried men, too, who were intimate with him, though no evidence of their burial there remains except in the parish register. In the "monthly accounts" of St. Saviour's you come upon these entries concerning two of his contemporary dramatists :—

"1625. *August* 29th, John Fletcher, a poet, in the church."
"1638. *March* 18th, Philip Massinger, stranger, in the church."

the inference being that Fletcher had resided in the parish, and Massinger, the "stranger," had not. But earlier than either of these, it is on record that on the 31st December 1607, Shakespeare's youngest brother, Edmund, "a player," was buried here, and a fee of

twenty shillings was paid by some one for "a forenoon knell of the great bell."

St. Saviour's, then, the sites of the Globe Theatre and the Mermaid, and that corner of Monkwell Street are London's chief Shakespearean shrines. The discovery of the Monkwell Street residence emphasises that before Ben Jonson founded his Apollo Club at the Devil Tavern by Temple Bar, Cheapside and not Fleet Street was the heart of literary London. Whilst Shakespeare made his home with the Mountjoys, Ben Jonson and Dekker were living near him in Cripplegate, in which district also resided Johnson the actor, Anthony Munday, and other of Shakespeare's intimates; nearer still, in Aldermanbury, lived Heminges and Condell, his brother actors, who first collected and published his plays after his death: and George Wilkins, at whose inn near St. Sepulchre's Stephen Bellott and his wife lodged after their quarrel with Mountjoy, was a minor dramatist who, besides collaborating with Rowley, collaborated with Shakespeare himself in the writing of *Pericles*. Coryat, the eccentric author of the *Crudities*, lived in Bow Lane; Donne, who was born in Wood Street, wrote his early poems there in the house of the good merchant, his father, and was a frequenter of the Mermaid.

In 1608 Milton was born in Bread Street (Shakespeare must have passed his door many a time in his goings to and fro), and grew up to live and work within the City walls in Aldersgate Street, and in Bartholomew Close, and just without them in Bunhill Row, and was brought back within them to be buried in Cripplegate Church. These, and its earlier and many later literary associations, help to halo

Cheapside and its environs, and, in spite of the sordid commercial aspect and history that have overtaken it, to make it for ever a street in the kingdom of romance.

And the chief glory of Cheapside itself is, of course, the Mermaid. One of these days a fitting sign will be placed above the spot where it stood, and set forth in letters of gold the great names that are inseparable from its story, and first among these will be the names of Shakespeare, Ben Jonson, Beaumont, Fletcher, Selden, Donne, Carew, Fuller, Sir Walter Raleigh.

The Mermaid rose on Cheapside with a side entrance in Friday Street, and of evenings when no business took him to the theatre, or towards midnight when he was on his way home from it, Shakespeare often turned aside into this famous meeting-place of the immortals of his generation. Everybody is familiar with those rapturous lines in Beaumont's letter to Ben Jonson, "written before he and Master Fletcher came to London with two of the precedent comedies, then not finished, which deferred their merry meetings at the Mermaid;" but one cannot talk of the Mermaid without remembering them and quoting from them once again :—

"In this warm shine
I lie and dream of your full Mermaid wine. . . .
Methinks the little wit I had is lost
Since I saw you: for wit is like a rest
Held up at tennis, which men do the best
With the best gamesters! What things have we seen
Done at the Mermaid! heard words that have been
So nimble and so full of subtile flame
As if that every one from whence they came
Had meant to put his whole wit in a jest,
And had resolved to live a fool the rest

Of his dull life; then when there hath been thrown
Wit able enough to justify the town
For three days past, wit that might warrant be
For the whole city to talk foolishly
Till that were cancelled; and when that was gone,
We left an air behind us which alone
Was able to make the next two companies
Right witty; though but downright fools, mere wise."

Well might Keats ask in a much later day (probably whilst he was tenanting the Cheapside rooms over Bird-in-Hand Court in which he wrote the sonnet on Chapman's Homer):

"Souls of poets dead and gone,
What Elysium have ye known,
Happy field or mossy cavern
Choicer than the Mermaid Tavern?"

And in our own time, in *Christmas at the Mermaid*, Watts-Dunton has recreated that glamorous hostelry and brought together again the fine spirits who used to frequent it—brought them together in an imaginary winter's night shortly after Shakespeare had departed from them and gone back to Stratford for good. Jonson is of that visionary company, and Raleigh, Lodge, Dekker, Chapman, Drayton and Heywood, and it is Heywood who breaks in, after the tale-telling and reminiscent talk, with—

"More than all the pictures, Ben,
Winter weaves by wood or stream,
Christmas loves our London, when
Rise thy clouds of wassail-steam:
Clouds like these that, curling, take
Forms of faces gone, and wake
Many a lay from lips we loved, and make
London like a dream."

It is because of the memories that sleep within it, like music in a lute until a hand that knows touches it, because of all it has been, and because it is never more wonderful than when you can so make it like a dream, that I give thanks for the fog that comes down upon London at intervals, in the grey months, and with silent wizardries conjures it out of sight. Look at this same Cheapside on a clear day, and it is simply a plain, prosperous, common-place street, but when a fog steals quietly through it and spiritualises it to something of the vagueness and grandeur and mystery of poetry it is no longer a mere earthly thoroughfare under the control of the Corporation; it becomes a dream-street in some mist-built city of the clouds, and you feel that at any moment the pavements might thin out and shred away and let you through into starry, illimitable spaces. Where the brown fog warms to a misty, golden glow you know there are shop windows. As you advance the street-lamps twinkle in the thick air, as if they were kindled magically at your coming and flickered out again directly you were past. The coiling darkness is loud with noises of life, but you walk among them with a sense of aloofness and solitude, for you can see nothing but flitting shadows all about you and know that you are yourself only a shadow to them.

For me, three of the loveliest and most strangely touching sights of London are the stars shining very high in the blue and very quietly when you look up at them from the roaring depths of a crowded, naphtha-flaring, poverty-stricken market street; a sunrise brightening over the Thames below London Bridge, while the barges are still asleep with the gleam of

their lamps showing pale in the dawn; and the blurred lights and ghostly buildings of a long city road that is clothed in mystery and transfigured by a brooding, dream-haunted fog. Perhaps this is only because of the dim feeling one has that the stars and the sunrise are of the things that the wasting centuries have not changed; and the fog that blots out to-day makes it easier to realise that yesterday and the life of yesterday are close about us still, and that we might see them with our waking eyes, even as we see them in our dreams, if the darkness would but lift.

CHAPTER III

WHERE POPE STAYED AT BATTERSEA

Coming from Chelsea by way of Battersea Bridge, you go a few yards along the Battersea Bridge Road, then turn aside into Church Road, and presently you pass a narrow, mean street of small houses, which is Bolingbroke Road, and serves to remind you that the Bolingbrokes were once lords of the manor of Battersea and proprietors of the ferry that crossed the river hereabouts before the first Battersea Bridge was built. A little further down Church Road, past squat and grimy houses on the one hand and gaunt walls and yawning gateways of mills, distilleries, and miscellaneous "works" on the other, and you come to a gloomy gateway that has "To Bolingbroke House" painted up on one of its side-walls. Through this opening you see a busy, littered yard; straw and scraps of paper and odds and ends of waste blow about on its stones; stacks of packing-cases and wooden boxes rise up against a drab background of brick buildings, and deep in the yard, with a space before it in which men are at work and a waggon is loading, you find the forlorn left wing—all that survives—of what was once the family seat of Henry St. John, Viscount Bolingbroke, whose chief title to remembrance now is that he was the friend of Alexander Pope.

Worn and dingy with age, its stone porch stained

and crumbling, and some of its windows broken, the place has a strange, neglected look, though it is still used for business purposes, and you have glimpses of clerks writing at their desks in the rooms from which Pope used to gaze out on very different surroundings.

It is difficult, indeed, to associate such a house and such a neighbourhood as this has now become with so fastidious, finicking, and modish a poet as Pope. All the adjacent streets are squalid, poverty-stricken, noisy; along the main road, almost within hearing, trams and motor-buses shuttle continually to and fro: except for a quaint, dirty, weary-looking cottage that still stands dreaming here and there among its ugly, mid-Victorian neighbours, and for the river that laps below the fence at the end of the yard, there is scarcely anything left of the quiet, green, rural Battersea village with which he was familiar; even the church whose steeple rises near by above the mills, and in which Bolingbroke was buried, was rebuilt a few years after his death.

Nevertheless, this weatherbeaten, time-wasted old house down the yard is the same house that, when it stood with Bolingbroke's lawn before it and his pleasant gardens sloping to the Thames, was the occasional home of Pope, and numbered Swift, Thomson, and other of the great men of letters of Queen Anne's reign among its visitors. One of the rooms overlooking the river, a room lined with cedar, beautifully inlaid, is still known as "Mr. Pope's parlour"; it is said to have been used by Pope as his study, and that he wrote his *Essay on Man* in it.

It is therefore the more fitting that Pope should have dedicated *An Essay on Man* to Bolingbroke,

Pope's House
Battersea
Fred^k Adcock

whom he addresses in the opening lines with that exhortation :—

> "Awake, my St. John, leave all meaner things
> To low ambition, and the pride of kings!"

He dedicated also one of his Imitations of Horace to—

> "St. John, whose love indulged my labours past,
> Matures my present, and shall bound my last."

A man of brilliant gifts, both as writer and statesman, Bolingbroke became involved in the political intriguings of his day, and in 1715 had to flee to Calais to escape arrest for high treason. Eight years later he was allowed to return, and his forfeited estates were given back to him. On the death of his father he took up his residence at Battersea, and it was there that he died of cancer in 1751. "Pope used to speak of him," writes Warton, "as a being of a superior order that had condescended to visit this lower world;" and he, in his turn, said of Pope, "I never in my life knew a man that had so tender a heart for his particular friends, or more general friendship for mankind."

And on the whole one feels that this character of Pope was truer than Lady Mary Wortley Montagu's presentation of him as "the wicked asp of Twickenham"; for if he was viciously cruel to Colley Cibber and the poor Grub Street scribblers whom he satirises in *The Dunciad*, he was kindness itself to Akenside and other of his younger rivals in reading their manuscripts and recommending them to his publishers; and if he retorted bitterly upon Addison after he had fallen out with him, he kept unbroken

to the last his close friendship with Swift, Gay, Garth, Atterbury, Bolingbroke, and with Arbuthnot, for whose services in helping him through "this long disease, my life" he expressed a touchingly affectionate gratitude. If he had been the heartless little monster his enemies painted him he could not have felt so tireless and beautiful a love for his father and mother and, despite his own feebleness and shattered health, have devoted himself so assiduously to the care of his mother in her declining years. "O friend," he writes to Arbuthnot, in the Prologue to the Satires :—

> "O friend, may each domestic bliss be thine!
> Be no unpleasing melancholy mine:
> Me let the tender office long engage
> To rock the cradle of reposing age,
> With lenient arts extend a mother's breath,
> Make languor smile, and smooth the bed of death,
> Explore the thought, explain the asking eye,
> And keep a while one parent from the sky."

All his life, Pope dwelt in London or on the skirts of it. He was twenty-eight when, soon after the death of his father in 1715, he leased the famous villa at Twickenham and took his mother to live with him there, and it was from there when she died, a very old lady of ninety-three, that on the 10th June 1783, he wrote to an artist friend the letter that enshrines his sorrow :—

"As I know you and I naturally desire to see one another, I hoped that this day our wishes would have met and brought you hither. And this for the very reason which possibly might hinder your coming, that my poor mother is dead. I thank God her death was easy, as her life was innocent, and as it cost her

not a groan or even a sigh, there is yet upon her countenance such an expression of tranquillity, nay, almost of pleasure, that, far from horrid, it is even amiable to behold it. It would form the finest image of a saint expired that ever painter drew, and it would be the greatest obligation art could ever bestow on a friend if you could come and sketch it for me. I am sure if there be no prevalent obstacle you will leave every common business to do this; and I hope to see you this evening as late as you will, or to-morrow morning as early, before this winter flower is faded. I will defer her interment till to-morrow night. I know you love me or I would not have written this—I could not (at this time) have written at all. Adieu. May you die as happily."

From Twickenham Pope made frequent visits to London, where he stayed in lodgings, or at the houses of friends; and in the last four or five years of his life, after Bolingbroke had settled down at Battersea, he put up as often as not at Bolingbroke House. Of his personal appearance at this date there are a good many records. One of his numerous lampooners, unkindly enough but very graphically, pictures him as—

> "Meagre and wan, and steeple crowned,
> His visage long, his shoulders round;
> His crippled corse two spindle pegs
> Support, instead of human legs;
> His shrivelled skin's of dusty grain,
> A cricket's voice, and monkey's brain."

His old enemy, John Dennis, sneering at his hunched and drooping figure, described him as "a young, short, squab gentleman, the very bow of the god of

love." He had to be laced up tightly in bodices made of stiff canvas, so that he might hold himself erect, and, says Dr. Johnson, "his stature was so low, that to bring him to a level with a common table it was necessary to raise his seat. But his face was not displeasing, and his eyes were animated and vivid." And here is Sir Joshua Reynolds's word-picture of him: "He was about four feet six inches high, very hump-backed and deformed. He wore a black coat, and, according to the fashion of that time, had on a little sword. He had a large and very fine eye, and a long, handsome nose; his mouth had those peculiar marks which are always found in the mouths of crooked persons, and the muscles which run across the cheek were so strongly marked that they seemed like small cords."

This is the queer, misshapen, pathetic little shape that haunts that old-world house in the yard at Battersea, and you may gather something of the life he lived there, and of the writing with which he busied himself in the cedar parlour, from these extracts out of two of his letters, both of which were written to Warburton :—

"*January* 12, 1743-4.

"Of the public I can tell you nothing worthy of the reflection of a reasonable man; and of myself only an account that would give you pain; for my asthma has increased every week since you last heard from me to the degree of confining me totally to the fireside; so that I have hardly seen any of my friends but two (Lord and Lady Bolingbroke), who happen to be divided from the world as much as myself, and are constantly retired at Battersea. There I have

passed much of my time, and often wished you of the company, as the best I know to make me not regret the loss of others, and to prepare me for a nobler scene than any mortal greatness can open to us. I fear by the account you gave me of the time you design to come this way, one of them (Lord B.) whom I much wish you had a glimpse of (as a being *paullo minus ab angelio*), will be gone again, unless you pass some weeks in London before Mr. Allen arrives there in March. My present indisposition takes up almost all my hours to render a very few of them supportable; yet I go on softly to prepare the great edition of my things with your notes, and as fast as I receive any from you, I add others in order (determining to finish the Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot and two or three of the best of Horace, particularly that of Augustus, first), which will fall into the same volume with the Essay on Man. I determined to publish a small number of the Essay, and of the other on Criticism, ere now, as a sample of the rest, but Bowyer advised delay, though I now see I was not in the wrong."

"*February* 21, 1743-4.

"I own that the late encroachments on my constitution make me willing to see the end of all further care about me or my works. I would rest from the one in a full resignation of my being to be disposed of by the Father of all mercy, and for the other (though indeed a trifle, yet a trifle may be some example) I would commit them to the candour of a sensible and reflecting judge, rather than to the malice of every short-sighted and malevolent critic or inadvertent and censorious reader. And no hand can

set them in so good a light, or so well turn them best side to the day, as your own. This obliges me to confess I have for some months thought myself going, and that not slowly, down the hill—the rather as every attempt of the physicians, and still the last medicines more forcible in their nature, have utterly failed to serve me. I was at last, about seven days ago, taken with so violent a fit at Battersea, that my friends, Lord Bolingbroke and Lord Marchmont, sent for present help to the surgeon, whose bleeding me, I am persuaded, saved my life by the instantaneous effect it had, and which has continued so much to amend me that I have passed five days without oppression, and recovered, what I have three days wanted, some degree of expectoration and some hours together of sleep. I can now go to Twickenham, to try if the air will not take some part in reviving me, if I can avoid colds, and between that place and Battersea, with my Lord Bolingbroke, I will pass what I have of life while he stays, which I can tell you, to my great satisfaction, will be this fortnight or three weeks yet."

In the year after writing this Pope came to the end of all further care about himself and his works; he died at Twickenham, and lies buried under the middle aisle of Twickenham Church.

CHAPTER IV

HOGARTH

BEFORE he took up residence at the Twickenham villa, Pope lived for some time with his father in one of the houses of Mawson's Buildings (now Mawson Row), Chiswick. So far it has been impossible to decide which of these five red-brick houses is the one that was theirs, for the only evidence of their tenancy consists of certain letters preserved at the British Museum, which are addressed to "Alexr. Pope, Esquire, Mawson's Buildings, in Chiswick," and on the backs of these are written portions of the original drafts of Pope's translation of the Iliad. James Ralph, the unfortunate poetaster whom Pope satirised in his *Dunciad*, was also a native of Chiswick, and lies buried in the parish churchyard. One other link Pope has with Chiswick—he wrote a rather poor epigram on Thomas Wood, who resided there, and who seems to have been connected with the Church, for according to the poet—

> "Tom Wood of Chiswick, deep divine,
> To painter Kent gave all his coin;
> 'Tis the first coin, I'm bold to say,
> That ever churchman gave away."

This Kent, I take it, was the man of the same name who likewise lived at Chiswick in Pope's day, and was

more notable as a landscape gardener than as a painter.

But, to say nothing of William Morris's more recent association with the district, the most interesting house in Chiswick is Hogarth's. It is a red-brick villa of the Queen Anne style, with a quaint, overhanging bay window, and stands in a large, walled garden, not far from the parish church. For many years this was Hogarth's summer residence—his "villakin," as he called it. His workshop, or studio, that used to be at the foot of the garden, has been demolished; otherwise the house remains very much as it was when he occupied it.

Hogarth was essentially a town man; he was almost, if not quite, as good a Londoner as Lamb. He was born in Bartholomew Close, West Smithfield, that storied place where Milton had lived before, and Washington Irving went to live after, him; and he spent nearly all his life in the neighbourhood of Leicester Square. He was rarely absent from London at all, and never for long; even when he was supposed to be passing his summers at his Chiswick villa, he made frequent excursions into town, and would put up for a few days at his house in Leicester Square—or Leicester Fields, as it then was.

In 1712 Hogarth went to serve a six years' apprenticeship to Ellis Gamble, a silver-plate engraver, in Cranbourne Alley (now Cranbourne Street), and, on the death of his father in 1718, he started business for himself as an engraver in what had been his father's house in Long Lane, West Smithfield, and later removed to the corner of Cranbourne Alley, leaving

his mother with his two sisters, who had opened shop as mercers, at the old Long Lane address. He engraved for them a shop card, duly setting forth that "Mary and Ann Hogarth, from the old Frock Shop, the corner of the Long Wall, facing the Cloysters, Removed to ye King's Arms joining to ye Little Britain Gate, near Long Walk, Sells ye best and most Fashionable Ready Made Frocks, Sutes of Fustian, Ticken, and Holland, Stript Dimity and Flanel Waistcoats, blue and canvas Frocks, and blue-coat Boys' Dra^rs, Likewise Fustians, Tickens, Hollands, white stript Dimitys, white and stript Flanels in ye piece, by Wholesale or Retale at Reasonable Rates."

Hogarth was very self-satisfied and rather illiterate; his spelling and his grammar—as in this shop-card—were continually going wrong. But he was kindly, good-hearted, high-minded, and had imagination and an original genius that could laugh at the nice, mechanical accomplishments of the schoolmaster. It was Nollekens, the sculptor, who said that he frequently saw Hogarth sauntering round Leicester Square, playing the nurse, "with his master's sickly child hanging its head over his shoulder." That was in the early days, when he was still serving his time to Gamble, and not even dreaming, I suppose, that he would one day own the big house at the south-east corner of the Square, would enjoy some of his highest triumphs and sharpest humiliations in it, and die in it at last, leaving behind him work that would give him a place among the very first of English painters.

Even before so fastidious a critic as Whistler had

declared that Hogarth was "the greatest English artist who ever lived," Hazlitt had said much the same thing, and paid a glowing tribute to the vitality and dramatic life of his pictures; but perhaps no critic has written a finer, more incisive criticism on him than Lamb did in his essay on "The Genius and Character of Hogarth." Lamb had been familiar with two of Hogarth's series of prints—"The Harlot's Progress," and "The Rake's Progress"—since his boyhood; and though he was keenly alive to the humour of them, he denied that their chief appeal was to the risible faculties. It was their profound seriousness, their stern satire, the wonderful creative force that underlay them, that most impressed him. "I was pleased," he says, "with the reply of a gentleman who, being asked which book he most esteemed in his library, answered 'Shakespeare'; being asked which he esteemed next best, replied 'Hogarth.' His graphic representations are indeed books; they have the teeming, fruitful, suggestive meaning of words. Other pictures we look at; his prints we read." He protests against confounding "the painting of subjects in common or vulgar life with the being a vulgar artist. The quantity of thought which Hogarth crowds into every picture would alone unvulgarise every subject he might choose. Let us take the lowest of his subjects, the print called 'Gin Lane.' Here is plenty of poverty and low stuff to disgust upon a superficial view; and accordingly a cold spectator feels himself immediately disgusted and repelled. I have seen many turn away from it, not being able to bear it. The same persons would, perhaps, have looked with great complacency upon

Poussin's celebrated picture of the 'Plague of Athens.' Disease and death and bewildering terror in Athenian garments are endurable, and come, as the delicate critics express it, within the 'limits of pleasurable sensation.' But the scenes of their own St. Giles's, delineated by their own countryman, are too shocking to think of. . . . We are for ever deceiving ourselves with names and theories. We call one man a great historical painter because he has taken for his subjects kings or great men, or transactions over which time has thrown a grandeur. We term another the painter of common life, and set him down in our minds for an artist of an inferior class, without reflecting whether the quantity of thought shown by the latter may not much more than level the distinction which their mere choice of subjects may seem to place between them; or whether, in fact, from that very common life a great artist may not extract as deep an interest as another man from that which we are pleased to call history." He found that, though many of the pictures had much in them that is ugly and repellent, "there is in most of them that sprinkling of the better nature which, like holy water, chases away and disperses the contagion of the bad. They have this in them besides, that they bring us acquainted with the everyday human face." And because of this, of their truth to contemporary life, and the vigorous realism of the stories they tell, he ranked the work of Hogarth not only high among that of the world's great painters, but with the best novels of such men as Smollett and Fielding.

According to a note in his fragmentary autobiography, Hogarth conceived an early admiration for

Sir Isaac Newtons House
St Martins Street W.C
Fred^k Adcock

the paintings of Sir James Thornhill, and, somewhere about 1727, he joined the painting school that Sir James established in the Piazza, at the corner of James Street, Covent Garden. And Sir James soon seems to have taken a particular interest in his pupil, and had him as a frequent visitor to his house at 75 Dean Street, Soho; and on March 23rd, 1729, he

SIR JAMES THORNHILL
75 DEAN STREET
SA

eloped with his teacher's daughter, and they were married at old Paddington Church. There are paintings and decorations still to be seen on the walls of the Dean Street house, in some of which Hogarth is believed to have had a hand.

After his marriage, Hogarth lived for a while at Lambeth; but it was not long before he was reconciled to his father-in-law. In 1730 he was engaged

with Sir James Thornhill on their famous picture of "The House of Commons"; and a year later, when he was engraving his series of prints "The Harlot's Progress," he and his wife had apparently taken up quarters with Sir James in the Piazza.

"The Harlot's Progress," and the issue of "The Rake's Progress" shortly afterwards, lifted Hogarth into fame. He began to move in better society, and was to be met with at the fashionable as well as at the Bohemian clubs of the day. He and Thornhill founded the Arts Club at the Turk's Head, in Gerrard Street; and, after the latter's death, he took over Thornhill's art school, and transferred it to Peter's Court, St. Martin's Lane. Occasionally he visited Richardson, the novelist, in Salisbury Court; and it was here he first made the acquaintance of Dr. Johnson. He struck up a friendship with Garrick, too, and painted several portraits of him, for one of which he received two hundred pounds; and with Fielding, of whom he has given us the only portrait we possess.

By 1733 Hogarth was prosperous enough to take the house in Leicester Square that was pulled down, in 1870, to furnish a site for the Archbishop Tenison School that has replaced it; and in 1749, "having sacrificed enough to his fame and fortune," he purchased the villa at Chiswick as a summer holiday home, and became a familiar figure about the Chiswick lanes from time to time—"a blue-eyed, intelligent little man, with a scar over his right eye, and wearing a fur cap." Allan Cunningham furnishes a more vivid description of his personal appearance in his *Lives of*

the Painters, where he says he was "rather below the middle height; his eye was peculiarly bright and piercing; his look shrewd, sarcastic, and intelligent; the forehead high and round. He was active in person, bustling in manner, and fond of affecting a little state and importance. He was of a temper cheerful, joyous, and companionable, fond of mirth and good-fellowship." Benjamin West called him a strutting, consequential little man; and, one way and another, we know that he was sturdy, obstinate, pugnacious, and that once he thrashed a ruffian whom he found maltreating the beautiful drummeress that he sketched in his picture of Southwark Fair. Possibly that scar over his right eye was a record of this chivalrous deed.

There are very few records of his home life, and these are of the homeliest, most ordinary sort. He was fond of smoking, and the arm-chair, in which he was wont to sit with his pipe, is still preserved at Chiswick. He had a favourite dog, a pet cat, and a bullfinch, which he buried in his Chiswick garden, commemorating them with tablets that have now vanished from the wall, the bird's epitaph being "Alas, poor Dick!" and the dog's, "Life to the last enjoyed, here Pompey lies"—which parodies a line in the *Candidate*, by that dissipated, brilliant satirist, Charles Churchill: "Life to the last enjoyed, here Churchill lies."

The *Candidate* was published at the beginning of 1764, and on the 25th October of that year Hogarth died. Churchill had been a warm friend of his, but before the end had become one of his bitterest enemies —that enmity arising in this wise. In 1762 Hogarth

published a political print called the *Times*, in which he supported the policy of Lord Bute, and ridiculed Pitt, Temple, and Wilkes. By way of retaliation, Wilkes wrote a scathing attack upon Hogarth in his paper, the *North Briton*, in which he made a sneering reference to Mrs. Hogarth. This stirred Hogarth to anger; and when Wilkes was presently arrested on a charge of high treason, he sat in court and sketched the prisoner, immortalising his villainous squint, and accentuating all the worst qualities in his features. On this print making its appearance, Churchill, a staunch friend and partisan of Wilkes, took up the cudgels, and scarified Hogarth without mercy in *An Epistle to William Hogarth* (1763), praising his art, but pouring contempt upon his envy and self-esteem, and affecting to believe that he was in his dotage. He can laud the genius, he says, but not the man.

> "Freely let him wear
> The wreath which Genius wove and planted there:
> Foe as I am, should envy tear it down,
> Myself would labour to replace the crown. . . .
> Hogarth unrivalled stands, and shall engage
> Unrivalled praise to the most distant age."

But for the man—

> "Hogarth, stand forth—I dare thee to be tried
> In that great Court where Conscience must preside;
> At that most solemn bar hold up thy hand;
> Think before whom, on what account you stand;
> Speak, but consider well;—from first to last
> Review thy life, weigh every action past.
> Canst thou remember from thy earliest youth,
> And as thy God must judge thee, speak the truth,
> A single instance where, self laid aside,

And Justice taking place of Fear and Pride,
Thou with an equal eye didst Genius view,
And give to Merit what was Merit's due?
Genius and Merit are a sure offence,
And thy soul sickens at the name of sense.
Is any one so foolish to succeed?
On Envy's altar he is doomed to bleed;
Hogarth, a guilty pleasure in his eyes,
The place of executioner supplies;
See how he gloats, enjoys the sacred feast,
And proves himself by cruelty a priest. . . .
Oft have I known thee, Hogarth, weak and vain,
Thyself the idol of thy awkward strain,
Through the dull measure of a summer's day,
In phrase most vile, prate long, long hours away,
Whilst friends with friends all gaping sit, and gaze,
To hear a Hogarth babble Hogarth's praise. . . .
With all the symptoms of assured decay,
With age and sickness pinched and worn away,
Pale quivering lips, lank cheeks, and faltering tongue,
The spirits out of tune, the nerves unstrung,
The body shrivelled up, the dim eyes sunk
Within their sockets deep, thy weak hams shrunk,
The body's weight unable to sustain,
The stream of life scarce trembling through the vein,
More than half killed by honest truths which fell,
Through thy own fault, from men who wished thee well—
Canst thou, e'en thus, thy thoughts to vengeance give
And, dead to all things else, to malice live?
Hence, dotard, to thy closet; shut thee in;
By deep repentance wash away thy sin;
From haunts of men to shame and sorrow fly,
And, on the verge of death, learn how to die!"

Hurt and deeply mortified, a month later Hogarth satirised Churchill's former connection with the Church and present loose living in a caricature which represented him as a bear wearing torn clerical bands, with ruffles on his paws, in one hand a pot of porter, and in the other a bundle of lies and copies of the

North Briton. Garrick had heard that Churchill was making ready to issue that vitriolic satire of his, and hastened to beg him, "by the regard you profess to me, that you don't tilt at my friend Hogarth before you see me. He is a great and original genius. I love him as a man, and reverence him as an artist. I would not for all the politics and politicians in the universe that you two should have the least cause of ill-will to each other. I am sure you will not publish against him if you think twice." One could honour Garrick if it were for nothing else but that letter; but it was written in vain, and the exasperation and humiliation that Hogarth suffered under Churchill's lash are said to have hastened his death. He had been broken in health and ailing all through the summer of 1764, but took several plates down to his Chiswick villa with him for retouching, and—possibly with some foreboding of his own approaching dissolution—drew for a new volume of his prints a tailpiece depicting "the end of all things."

But he could not be satisfied to keep away from London, and on 25th October was conveyed from Chiswick to his house in Leicester Square, "very weak," says Nichols, "but remarkably cheerful, and, receiving an agreeable letter from Dr. Franklin" (Benjamin Franklin lived in his earlier years, about 1727, in Bartholomew Close; later, in 1757, and again from 1764 to 1774, he resided at Craven Street, Strand), "he drew up a rough draft of an answer to it; but, going to bed, was seized with a vomiting, upon which he rang the bell with such violence, that he broke it, and expired about two hours afterwards in the arms of Mrs. Mary Lewis, who was called up on his being suddenly taken ill"

He was buried in Chiswick Churchyard; and in 1771 his friends erected a monument over him, the epitaph on which was written by Garrick :—

"Farewell, great Painter of Mankind,
Who reached the noblest point of Art,
Whose pictured morals charm the Mind,
And through the eye correct the Heart.

If Genius fire thee, Reader, stay;
If Nature touch thee, drop a tear;
If neither move thee, turn away,
For Hogarth's honoured dust lies here."

Garrick sent his verses to Dr. Johnson, who frankly criticised them, and offered him a revised version, the first lines of which were a distinct improvement :—

"The hand of Art here torpid lies
That traced the essential form of Grace;
Here Death has closed the curious eyes
That saw the manners in the face." . . .

Garrick preferred his own composition, slightly altered, as it now appears; but Johnson's was certainly the better effort of the two.

Mrs. Hogarth retained possession of the Leicester Square house until her death in 1789, but she resided principally at Chiswick. Sir Richard Phillips saw her there, when he was a boy, and had vivid recollections of her as a stately old lady, wheeled to the parish church on Sundays in a bath-chair, and sailing in up the nave with her raised head-dress, silk sacque, black calash, and crutched cane, accompanied by a relative (the Mary Lewis who was with Hogarth when he died), and preceded by her grey-haired man-servant, Samuel,

who carried her prayer-books, and, after she was seated, shut the pew door on her.

From 1824 to 1826 the Hogarth villa was inhabited by the Rev. H. F. Cary, the translator of Dante, who was one of Charles Lamb's many friends, and wrote the feeble epitaph that is on his tomb at Edmonton.

Sir Joshua Reynolds' House.
Gt Newport Street
Fred^k Adcock

CHAPTER V

GOLDSMITH, REYNOLDS, AND SOME OF THEIR CIRCLE

One of Sir James Thornhill's illustrious sitters was Sir Isaac Newton, who lived within a stone's throw of Hogarth's London house, just round the corner out of Leicester Square, at No. 35 St. Martin's Street. Here Sir Isaac made his home from 1720 to 1725. The red brick walls were stuccoed over; and the observatory that the philosopher built for himself on the roof, after being turned into a Sunday-school, was removed about seventy years ago, and helped to supply pews for the Orange Street Chapel that stands next door. Now the house itself has been demolished.

The greatest of Newton's work was done before he set up in St. Martin's Street, but he told a friend that the happiest years of his life had been spent in the observatory there. Though he kept his carriage, lived in some style, had half-a-dozen male and female servants, and was always hospitable, he was not fond of society, and talked but little in it. Johnson once remarked to Sir William Jones that if Newton had flourished in ancient Greece, he would have been worshipped as a divinity, but there was nothing godlike in his appearance. "He was a man of no very promising aspect," says Herne; and Humphrey Newton describes his famous relative as of a carriage "meek,

sedate, and humble; never seeming angry, of profound thought, his countenance mild, pleasant, and comely. He always kept close to his studies. . . . I never knew him to take any recreation or pastime, thinking all hours lost that were not spent in his studies." There are a good many stories told of his eccentricities and absent-mindedness. He would ride through London in his coach with one arm out of the window on one side and one out on the other; he would sometimes start to get up of a morning and sit down on his bed, absorbed in thought, and so remain for hours without dressing himself; and, when his dinner was laid, he would walk about the room, forgetting to eat it, and carelessly eat it standing when his attention was called to it. On one occasion, when he was leading his horse up a hill, he found, when he went to remount on reaching the top, that the animal had slipped its bridle and stayed behind without his perceiving it, and he had nothing in his hand but some of the harness. "When he had friends to entertain," according to Dr. Stukeley, "if he went into his study to fetch a bottle of wine, there was danger of his forgetting them," and not coming back again. And it is told of this same Dr. Stukeley that he called one day to see Newton, and was shown into the dining-room, where Sir Isaac's dinner was in readiness. After a long wait, feeling hungry as well as impatient, Stukeley ate the cold chicken intended for his host, and left nothing but the bones. By-and-by Sir Isaac entered, made his greetings and apologies, and, whilst they were talking, drew a chair to the table, took off the dish-cover, and at sight of the bones merely observed placidly, "How absent

we philosophers are! I had forgotten that I had dined!"

Later, this same house in St. Martin's Street was occupied by Dr. Burney and his daughter Fanny, who wrote *Evelina* here.

Near by, in Leicester Square again, on the opposite side, and almost exactly facing Hogarth's residence, was the house of Sir Joshua Reynolds. From 1753 to 1761 Sir Joshua lived at 5 Great Newport Street, which was built in Charles II.'s days, and is still standing. It is now and has for a century past been occupied by a firm of art dealers; so that it happens from time to time that a picture of Reynolds's is here put up for sale, "on the very spot where it was painted." But in the crowning years of his career—from 1761 till his death, in 1792—Sir Joshua dwelt at 42 Leicester Square, and what was formerly his studio there has been transformed into one of Messrs. Puttick and Simpson's auction rooms. Here is Allan Cunningham's description of it, and of the painter's method of work: "His study was octagonal, some twenty feet long by sixteen broad, and about fifteen feet high. The window was small and square, and the sill nine feet from the floor. His sitters' chair moved on castors, and stood above the floor about a foot and a half. He held his palette by the handle, and the sticks of his brushes were eighteen inches long. He wrought standing, and with great celerity. He rose early, breakfasted at nine, entered his study at ten, examined designs or touched unfinished portraits, till eleven brought him a sitter; painted till four, then dressed, and gave the evenings to company."

And to the best of good company too. By day, the chariot of a duke or a marchioness might drive to his door, and return later to wait for his lordship or her ladyship, who was occupying the sitter's chair, while Sir Joshua was busy at his easel; but of an evening he would have such men as Dr. Johnson, Boswell, Goldsmith, Garrick, Burke (who was living close at hand, in Gerrard Street) gathered about his dinner-table; for in spite of his deafness he was the very soul of sociability. He never got out of his naturally careless, Bohemian habits. He was the favourite portrait-painter of the fashionable world, but mixed with the aristocracy without apeing any of their etiquette. "There was something singular in the style and economy of Sir Joshua's table that contributed to pleasantry and good-humour; a coarse, inelegant plenty, without any regard to order and arrangement," according to Courtenay. "A table prepared

Sir Benjamin West's House
Newman Street
Fred^k Adcock

for seven or eight was often compelled to contain fifteen or sixteen. When this pressing difficulty was got over, a deficiency of knives, plates, forks, and glasses succeeded. The attendance was in the same style; and it was absolutely necessary to call instantly for beer, bread, or wine, that you might be supplied with them before the first course was over. He was once prevailed on to furnish the table with decanters and glasses at dinner, to save time and prevent the tardy manœuvres of two or three occasional, undisciplined domestics. As these accelerating utensils were demolished in the course of service, Sir Joshua would never be persuaded to replace them. But these trifling embarrassments only served to enhance the hilarity and singular pleasure of the entertainment. The wines, cookery, and dishes were but little attended to; nor was the fish or venison ever talked of or recommended. Amidst this convivial, animated bustle among his guests, our host sat perfectly composed; always attentive to what was said, never minding what was ate or drunk, but left every one at perfect liberty to scramble for himself. Temporal and spiritual peers, physicians, lawyers, actors, and musicians composed the motley group, and played their parts without dissonance or discord."

He was so imperturbable and easy-natured that Dr. Johnson said if he ever quarrelled with him he would find it most difficult to know how to abuse him; and even the sharp-tongued Mrs. Thrale praised his peaceful temper, and considered that of him "all good should be said, and no harm." He shared Hogarth's contempt for the old masters; but, unlike Hogarth,

he was not loud and aggressive in his objections to them.

> "When they talked of their Raphaels, Correggios, and stuff,
> He shifted his trumpet, and only took snuff."

It was on Reynolds's suggestion that he and Johnson founded, in 1763, what later became celebrated as the Literary Club. They held their first meetings at the Turk's Head (where Hogarth and Thornhill had previously established their Art Club), and among the original members were Burke, Langton, Beauclerk, Goldsmith, and Sir John Hawkins. The latter, an arrant snob, objected to Goldsmith's election on the ground that he was "a mere literary drudge," but his protest carried no weight with the rest. Five years later, when, under the patronage of the king, Reynolds inaugurated the Royal Academy, Johnson was appointed its first Professor of Ancient Literature, and Goldsmith its first Professor of History, Reynolds himself being its first President—in which office, on his death in 1792, he was succeeded by Benjamin West. West was an American, and had won a considerable reputation in his own country before he came over and settled down in England. He was introduced to Johnson and Reynolds, and was for some time a neighbour of Sir Joshua's, in Castle Street, Leicester Square. But he is more closely associated with the house that occupied the site of 14 Newman Street, Oxford Street, in which he lived and worked for forty-five years, and in which he died.

A far greater contemporary painter, who moved on the fringes of Sir Joshua's circle, was Gainsborough. That he did not come familiarly into the circle, and

sometimes make one of the memorable company that gathered round Reynolds's dinner-table, was owing to some lack of geniality in himself, that kept him from responding to Sir Joshua's friendly advances. He came from Bath to London in 1774, when he was forty-seven years of age, took a studio at Schonberg House, Pall Mall, and it was not long before celebrities and leaders of fashion were flocking to it to sit for their portraits, and he was recognised as a successful rival of Reynolds. Reynolds was so far from feeling jealousy or resentment that he promptly paid his popular rival a visit; but Gainsborough did not trouble himself to return the call. No doubt it was to some extent owing to Reynolds, too, that in the year of his appearance in London he was elected to the council of management of the Royal Academy; but he ignored the honour, did not attend any meetings, and sent nothing to the exhibition. Reynolds was frankly outspoken in his admiration of Gainsborough's work, and was even anxious to have his own portrait painted by him. After some delay appointments were fixed, and Sir Joshua duly went to Schonberg House, and the painting was commenced. But after the first sitting he was taken ill; and when, on his recovery, he wrote to tell Gainsborough that he was ready to come again, he received no reply, and the portrait had to remain an unfinished sketch.

His coldness to Reynolds is inexplicable, for he was a kindly-disposed man, and sociable. He kept almost open house in Pall Mall, and such jovial spirits as the Sheridans, Colman, and Garrick were among the constant guests at his table.

The year after Gainsborough's coming to London, Sheridan's *Rivals* was produced at the Covent Garden Theatre, to be followed two years after by *The School for Scandal*. Before he was out of his twenties Sheridan had finished his career as a dramatist, turned to politics, and was one of the most brilliant of Parliamentary orators, still remaining principal proprietor of Drury Lane Theatre. All his life he was living beyond his income, borrowing, getting into debt, and dodging duns and bailiffs with the gayest imperturbability. Everybody liked him, and was susceptible to his charm. Wherever the wits foregathered, he was the best drinker, the best talker, and the wittiest among them. Byron writes of him in his *Diary:* "What a wreck that man is! and all from bad pilotage; for no one had ever better gales, though now and then a little too squally. Poor dear Sherry! I shall never forget the day he and Rogers and Moore and I passed together; when he talked and we listened, without one yawn, from six till one in the morning." In a letter to Moore, Byron records a dinner at which Sheridan, Colman, and a large party were present, and at the finish, when they were all the worse for drink, "Kinnaird and I had to conduct Sheridan down a damned corkscrew staircase, which had certainly been constructed before the discovery of fermented liquors, and to which no legs, however crooked, could possibly accommodate themselves. We deposited him safe at home, where his man, evidently used to the business, waited to receive him in the hall."

This was in October 1815, and 14 Savile Row is the house at which Sheridan was thus deposited by

his noble friend. He was then an old man of sixty-four, and a year later he died there, five thousand pounds in debt, and only saved, by the emphatic intervention of the doctor who was attending him, from being arrested by bailiffs as he lay dying, and carried off to a sponging-house in his blankets.

The year that brought Gainsborough to London (1774) was also the year of Goldsmith's death; and I want to get back to Goldsmith for a little, in this chapter, and to say something of Richardson. For it is curiously interesting to note how the lives of all these famous men, though there was little enough in common between some of them, met at certain points and established certain connecting links between them; so that it is possible, as Leigh Hunt has said somewhere, to trace a sort of genealogy of such acquaintanceships, such notable meetings and touchings of "beamy hands," coming down in an unbroken line from Shakespeare to our own day.

Thus, Hogarth first met Johnson in Richardson's parlour at Salisbury Court; and, in 1757, Goldsmith was employed by Richardson, and worked on his printing premises, in the same court, as reader and corrector to the press; and these, and most of the other immortals named in this chapter—including Sheridan, though he was then so young a man that he outlived them all, and counts among the friends of Lord Byron—have a common link in Dr. Johnson, who was so great a Londoner that he must needs have a chapter presently to himself, or one that he shall share with none but the inevitable Boswell.

Whilst Goldsmith was working as one of his

employees, Richardson was not only a prosperous printer, he was already the most popular novelist of his day. *Pamela*, *Clarissa Harlowe*, and *Sir Charles Grandison* had carried his fame throughout the kingdom and beyond it, and were drawing rapturous admiration and tears of sentiment from countless admirers in France as well as in England; and, as befitted a man of his means and eminence, he had supplemented his house off Fleet Street with a country residence at Parson's Green, where he died in 1761. Down to 1754, however, his country house was The Grange, at North End, Fulham, then a pretty, old-world spot, —"the pleasantest village within ten miles of London." And it was here that all his novels were written; for he took The Grange in 1738, and *Pamela* appeared in 1740, and *Sir Charles Grandison* in 1753. Here, too, he used to give large literary parties, to which Johnson occasionally went with Boswell. But whatever other authors were there, you may safely depend that Fielding was never among the guests; for with all his high morality Richardson was intolerably self-complacent and vain, and never forgave Fielding for burlesquing Pamela as "Shamela," and parodying her impossible virtues in *Joseph Andrews*.

Boswell gives two good anecdotes illustrative of Richardson's fretful vanity and the limits of his conversational powers. "Richardson had little conversation," he says Johnson once remarked to him, "except about his own works, of which Sir Joshua Reynolds said he was always willing to talk, and glad to have them introduced. Johnson, when he carried Mr. Langton to see him, professed that he could

bring him out in conversation, and used this illusive expression: 'Sir, I can make him *rear*.' But he failed; for in that interview Richardson said little else than that there lay in the room a translation of his *Clarissa* into German." And in a footnote to this Boswell adds: "A literary lady has favoured me with a characteristic anecdote of Richardson. One day at his country house at North End, where a large company was assembled at dinner, a gentleman who was just returned from Paris, willing to please Mr. Richardson, mentioned to him a very flattering circumstance—that he had seen his *Clarissa* lying on the king's brother's table. Richardson, observing that part of the company were engaged in talking to each other, affected not to attend to it. But by-and-by, when there was a general silence, and he thought that the flattery might be fully heard, he addressed himself to the gentleman, 'I think, sir, you were saying something about—' pausing in a high flutter of expectation. The gentleman, provoked at his inordinate vanity, resolved not to indulge it, and with an exquisitely sly air of indifference remarked, 'A mere trifle, sir, not worth repeating.' The mortification of Richardson was visible, and he did not speak ten words more the whole day. Dr. Johnson was present, and appeared to enjoy it much."

While Fielding was roystering in the wild haunts of Bohemian London, gambling at his club, reeling home to his chambers in Pump Court, and writing his novels in odds and ends of soberer time, Richardson was methodically composing his books at Fulham, getting up early of summer mornings, working at his

manuscript in the little summer-house that he had built in his garden, then reading over breakfast to the worshipping members of his family the results of his morning's labour. Wherever he went, groups of adoring ladies were sure to gather about him, to chatter fervently of their delight in his interminable

stories ; and he snuffed up their incense with a solemn and self-satisfied joy, for he took himself as seriously as he was taken by them, and never felt that he was ridiculous, even when he looked it. Not infrequently he would sit in his drawing-room at The Grange, or in the summer-house, surrounded by a rapt audience of feminine believers, who wept as he read aloud to them of the sufferings and heroic virtue of Pamela, or the persecutions of the gentle Clarissa. You

cannot think of it without imagining there, in one of the rooms, the comfortable, obese, touchy, rather pompous, double-chinned little gentleman, in his fair wig and dark coat, an ink-horn set in the arm of his chair with a quill sticking out of it, one hand thrust into the front of his waistcoat, the book or manuscript in his hand, reading gravely and deliberately his long, minute dissections of character, his elaborate descriptions of events and incidents, his formal dialogues, pleased when his stilted sentiment or simple sentimentality brought tears to the eyes of his listeners, and not ashamed to shed one or two with them.

He drew a word-portrait of himself for Lady Bradshaigh, which is fairly well known but is worth repeating, and, judging by the portraits we have of him, is a fairly true one. He paints himself as "short, rather plump, about five feet five inches, fair wig, one hand generally in his bosom, the other a cane in it, which he leans upon under the skirts of his coat that it may imperceptibly serve him as a support when attacked by sudden tremors or dizziness, which too frequently attack him, but, thank God! not so often as formerly; looking directly forthright, as passers-by would imagine, but observing all that stirs on either hand of him without moving his short neck; hardly ever turning back; of a light-brown complexion, teeth not yet failing him; smooth faced, and ruddy cheeked; at some times looking to be about sixty-five, at other times much younger; a regular, even pace, stealing away the ground rather than seeming to rid it; a grey eye, too often overclouded by mistiness from the head; by chance lively

—very lively it will be, if he have hope of seeing a lady whom he loves and honours."

RICHARDSON'S HOUSE
NORTH END FULHAM
Fred^k Adcock

Richardson's summer-house is long since gone from the garden, and long ago now The Grange was divided in two, and in the half that has been stucco-fronted

Burne-Jones went to live in 1867, dying there in 1898.

Five years after Goldsmith had given up proof-reading for Richardson, you find him still drudging amid the squalor of Grub Street, still living from hand to mouth, writing reviews and prefaces, revising and preparing new editions of dull books on dull subjects, for a sum of twenty-one pounds compiling a two-volume *History of England* in the form of a series of letters, and generally subduing his heart and mind to the doing of the wretched hack-work to which the impecunious literary man in all ages has usually been condemned.

His new taskmaster was Mr. Newbery the publisher, and he was living, in those days of 1762, in Wine Office Court, Fleet Street; but the publisher was not altogether ungenerous, and made arrangements that enabled his poor hack to leave town at intervals and work in the fresh air and rural environment of Islington. Newbery had chambers of his own there in Canonbury Tower, and Goldsmith used to put up at a cottage near by that was kept by an elderly Mrs. Fleming, a friend or relative of Newbery's, his bills for board and lodging being periodically settled by his employer, who deducted the amount of them from whatever fell due to Goldsmith from time to time for work done. Fortunately Mrs. Fleming's accounts have been preserved, and we get an idea of Goldsmith's wardrobe from her washing-lists, and learn from the items she carefully details that she now and then lent him small sums in cash—tenpence one day, and one and twopence another; that occasionally, when he had a friend to dinner,

though she duly noted it, she ostentatiously made no charge; but when four gentlemen came to take tea with him, she debited him with eighteenpence.

Probably one of those friends who had a free dinner was Hogarth, for he travelled out to Islington occasionally on a visit to Goldsmith; and there is a painting of his which is known as "Goldsmith's Hostess," and is believed to be none other than Mrs. Fleming's portrait.

You remember Boswell's story of how *The Vicar of Wakefield* saved Goldsmith from imprisonment for debt. "I received one morning a letter from poor Goldsmith that he was in great distress," Johnson told him, "and, as it was not in his power to come to me, begging that I would come to him as soon as possible. I sent him a guinea, and promised to come to him directly. I accordingly went as soon as I was dressed, and found that his landlady had arrested him for his rent, at which he was in a violent passion. I perceived that he had already changed my guinea, and had got a bottle of madeira and a glass before him. I put the cork in the bottle, desired he would be calm, and began to talk to him of the means by which he might be extricated. He then told me that he had a novel ready for the press, which he produced to me. I looked into it, and saw its merit. I told the landlady I should soon return; and, having gone to a bookseller, sold it for sixty pounds. I brought Goldsmith the money, and he discharged his rent, not without rating his landlady in a high tone for having used him so ill." Everything points to Mrs. Fleming as that harsh landlady, and the lodging in her cottage at Islington as the scene of that famous

interlude. The presumption is that Goldsmith had incurred a much heavier liability to her than was covered by what was accruing to him for his services to Newbery, as a result of his giving time to the writing of *The Vicar of Wakefield* that should have been devoted to his usual drudgery; and the cautious Newbery declined to make further advances, and advised his relative, the landlady, to adopt summary methods for the recovery of her debt. Goldsmith never lodged with Mrs. Fleming after that date; but later, when Newbery took a lease of Canonbury Tower, he was from time to time a guest there, and occupied a room in the turret. During one of these visits he wrote *The Traveller;* and in later years Charles Lamb often walked across from his Islington home to the Tower to watch the sunset from the summit, and to be entertained by the tenant of it in the panelled chamber where Goldsmith's poem was written.

It was with the publication of *The Traveller* that Goldsmith began to emerge from Grub Street. Its success was considerable enough to lead to the publisher's looking out the manuscript of *The Vicar of Wakefield*, and issuing that also; and in 1768, having made five hundred pounds by the production and publishing of *The Good-natured Man*, he removed from an attic in the Staircase, Inner Temple, and purchased a lease of three rooms on the second floor of 2 Brick Court, Temple. Blackstone, the lawyer, then working on his *Commentaries*, had chambers immediately below him, and complained angrily of the distracting noises—the singing, dancing, and playing blind-man's-buff—that went on over his head when Goldsmith was entertaining his friends.

Pale, round-faced, plain-featured, with a bulging forehead and an ugly, long upper lip, there was more of kindness and geniality than of dignity or intellect in Goldsmith's appearance. "His person was short," says Boswell, who was jealous of his friendship with Johnson, and never realised how great he was, "his countenance was coarse and vulgar, his deportment that of a scholar awkwardly affecting the easy gentleman. Those who were in any way distinguished excited envy in him to so ridiculous an excess that the instances of it are hardly credible." But Boswell misjudged him because, conceited and petty himself, he easily read those qualities into the behaviour of the other, and so misunderstood him. Goldsmith may have had some harmless vanity in the matter of dress, when he could afford to indulge it; but as for vanity of his achievements, that speaking of poetry as

"My shame in crowds, my solitary pride,"

is the spontaneous confession of a naturally shy and diffident spirit. When a man has been buffeted as he had been, has had to slave so hard and wait so long for his reward as he had slaved and waited, he accepts the fame that comes to him merely as wages well earned, and is not likely to grow swollen-headed concerning it. And for his envious character—here is what Boswell gives as a specimen of it. Johnson had come from an unexpected interview with the king, and a party of friends at Sir Joshua Reynolds's house in Leicester Square were gathered about him pressing for a full account of what had taken place. During all the time that Johnson was employed in this narration, remarks Boswell, "Dr. Goldsmith remained

unmoved upon a sofa at some distance, affecting not to join in the least in the eager curiosity of the company. He assigned as a reason for his gloom and seeming inattention that he apprehended Johnson had relinquished his purpose of furnishing him with a prologue to his play, with the hopes of which he had been flattered; but it was strongly suspected that he was fretting with chagrin and envy at the singular honour Dr. Johnson had lately enjoyed. At length, the frankness and simplicity of his natural character prevailed. He sprung from the sofa, advanced to Johnson, and in a kind of flutter from imagining himself in the situation which he had just been hearing described, exclaimed, 'Well, you acquitted yourself in this conversation better than I should have done; for I should have bowed and stammered through the whole of it.'" Naturally this talk with the king would not seem such a breathlessly overwhelming honour to such a man as Goldsmith as to such a snob as Boswell. It was in keeping with Goldsmith's nature that he should sit quietly listening and imagining the whole thing as he heard about it, instead of fussing round open-mouthed to pester the narrator with trivial questions; but Boswell was incapable of realising this.

When Boswell, in his toadying spirit, was saying that in any conversation Johnson was entitled to the honour of unquestionable superiority, and Goldsmith, with a truer conception of the art and pleasure of social intercourse, replied, "Sir, you are for making a monarchy of what should be a republic," Boswell took it as another proof of Goldsmith's envy, and of his "incessant desire of being conspicuous in com-

pany." He goes on to say: "He was still more mortified when, talking in a company with fluent vivacity and, as he flattered himself, to the admiration of all who were present, a German who sat next to

STAIRS UP TO SECOND FLOOR
2 BRICK COURT

him, and perceived Johnson rolling himself as if about to speak, suddenly stopped him, saying, 'Stay, stay! Toctor Shonson is going to say something!' This was no doubt very provoking, especially to one so irritable as Goldsmith, who frequently mentioned it with strong expressions of indignation." A vain man

GOLDSMITH'S HOUSE
CANONBURY
Fred^k Adcock

would not have mentioned it frequently, but a man with Goldsmith's sense of fun would be tickled by it, and rejoice to tell it as a joke against himself, simulating indignation to heighten the jest. When he heard that jape at Sir Joshua's table of taking peas to Hammersmith because that was the way to Turn'am Green, and afterwards retelling it muddled the phrase and made nonsense of it, Boswell offers it as further evidence that he was a blundering fool. But it is more likely that he blundered on purpose, merely to raise a laugh, that being his queer, freakish fashion of humour. But the Laird of Auchinleck and some of the others were too staid and heavy to follow his nimble wits in their grotesque and airy dancings.

Why, even the egregious Boswell has to admit that "Goldsmith, however, was often very fortunate in his witty contests, even when he entered the lists with Johnson himself." And once, when Johnson observed, "It is amazing how little Goldsmith knows; he seldom comes where he is not more ignorant than any one else," Reynolds put in quietly, "Yet there is no man whose company is more liked"; and the Doctor promptly admitted that, saying, "When people find a man of the most distinguished abilities as a writer their inferior while he is with them, it must be highly gratifying to them." But that did not fully explain why he was liked, of course; and what Johnson added as to "what Goldsmith comically says of himself" shows that Goldie knew his own weaknesses, and was amused by them. Lamb would have understood him and laughed with him, for he loved to frivol and play the fool in the same vein. When he was dead, Johnson said he was "a very great

man"; and don't you think there is some touch of remorse in that later remark of his, that the partiality of Goldsmith's friends was always against him, and "it was with difficulty we could give him a hearing"?

When he lay dead in his chambers at 2 Brick Court, as Forster relates, the staircase was filled with mourners the reverse of domestic—"women without a home, without domesticity of any kind, with no friend but him they had come to weep for; outcasts of that great, solitary, wicked city, to whom he had never

forgotten to be kind and charitable. And he had domestic mourners, too. His coffin was reopened at the request of Miss Horneck and her sister (such was the regard he was known to have for them), that a lock might be cut from his hair. It was in Mrs. Gwyn's possession when she died, after nearly seventy years." When Burke was told that Goldsmith was dead, he burst into tears; and when the news reached Reynolds in his Leicester Square painting-room, he laid his brush aside—a thing he had not been known to do even in times of great family distress—left his

study, and entered it no more that day. A vain and envious fool is not mourned in that fashion.

"I have been many a time in the chambers in the Temple which were his," writes Thackeray, "and passed up the staircase which Johnson and Burke and Reynolds trod to see their friend, their poet, their kind Goldsmith—the stair on which the poor women sat weeping bitterly when they heard that the greatest and most generous of all men was dead within the black oak door."

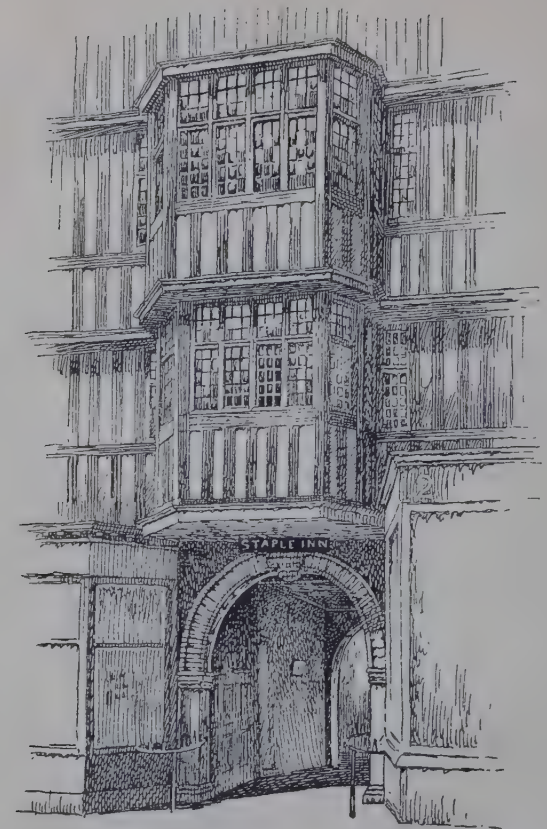
No. 2 Brick Court would be memorable enough if it held no other memory; but in 1839 Mackworth Praed died in the same house, and for a short time in 1855 Thackeray too had chambers in it.

CHAPTER VI

HOMES AND HAUNTS OF JOHNSON AND BOSWELL

If we were not quite such a business people, and had not so fully satisfied ourselves that the making of money is the chief end of existence, we should put up a statue to Dr. Johnson in Fleet Street, even if we had to knock down a house or two to find room for it. The statue by Mr. Percy Fitzgerald that has been erected in St. Clement Danes Churchyard, in the Strand, is better than nothing, but it is too insignificant in appearance, and stands in the wrong place. Johnson is still so far removed from death that he is more alive to-day than when he was living, and Fleet Street, and the courts and alleys opening out of Fleet Street, are his proper kingdom. Other great spirits haunt the same ground, but he overshadows them all.

At one time or another during the later forty-seven years of his life Johnson had sixteen different addresses in London, and six of them were in Fleet Street byways. On his first visit to town, in 1737, he had lodgings at Exeter Street, Strand, and made some short stay at Greenwich, whence he wrote to Cave, the publisher, offering to contribute to his *Gentleman's Magazine*. Next year he and his wife finally removed from Lichfield, and lodged first in Woodstock Street, Hanover Square, and then in Castle



ENTRANCE TO STAPLE INN
F.A

Street, Cavendish Square. Presently he flitted to the Strand; to Bow Street; to Holborn; to Fetter Lane; to Holborn again; then to Gough Square, at the top of Wine Office Court, where he lived for ten years; then to Staple Inn; to Gray's Inn; to No. 1 Inner Temple Lane; to No. 7 Johnson's Court (so named before his time, as Boswell Court was before Boswell's); and thence to Bolt Court, where, in 1784, he died.

Of all these homes of Johnson's, only two are now surviving—that in Staple Inn, which cannot be identified (we know only that it was one of the houses in the square); and that in Gough Square, which, next to the Bolt Court house, was the most interesting of his sixteen residences—and one is grateful that, mainly owing to the good offices of Mr. Cecil Harmsworth, it has been saved from demolition, and is now opened as a Johnson museum.

Johnson was still a bookseller's hack and a comparatively unknown man when, in 1747, at the age of thirty-eight, he started work on his *Dictionary*. He was then living in Holborn; but next year he moved into Gough Square, and it was here that most of this colossal work was done. And to-day, when you visit that house, you find that all the teeming life of the last hundred and sixty years has drained out of it completely, and nothing remains in the old rooms but memories of Johnson and his friends. He works there for ever now in the study that used to be his, poring short-sightedly over books and papers; and in the queer, sloping-ceilinged garret above are his six assistants, copying, hunting out references for the *Dictionary*, and busy with all the mechanical part of

the undertaking. You have only to stand there and think of it, and, if you have read Boswell and Hawkins, the life of the household as it was in those ten years long past refashions itself around you in the magic, old-world atmosphere of the place.

Five publishers joined in commissioning Johnson to compile the *Dictionary*, and arranged to pay him a sum of £1575, out of which he had to engage his assistants. "For the mechanical part," writes Boswell, "he employed six amanuenses; and let it be remembered by the natives of North Britain, to whom he is supposed to have been so hostile, that five of them were of that country. There were two Messieurs Macbean; Mr. Shiels; Mr. Stewart, son of Mr. George Stewart, bookseller at Edinburgh; and a Mr. Maitland. The sixth of these humble assistants was Mr. Peyton, who, I believe, taught French, and published some elementary tracts." That upper room in Gough Square was fitted up like a counting-house, and each of the six workers in it was allotted his separate task. Boswell goes on to describe Johnson's method: "The words, partly taken from other dictionaries and partly supplied by himself, having been first written down with spaces left between them, he delivered in writing their etymologies, definitions, and various significations. The authorities were copied from the books themselves, in which he had marked the passages with a black-lead pencil, the traces of which could easily be effaced. I have seen several of them in which that trouble had not been taken, so that they were just as when used by the copyists. It is remarkable that he was so attentive in the choice of the passages in which words were authorised that one may read page

after page of his *Dictionary* with improvement and pleasure; and it should not pass unobserved that he has quoted no author whose writings had a tendency to hurt sound religion and morality. . . . He is now to be considered as 'tugging at his oar,' as engaged in a steady, continued course of occupation, sufficient to employ all his time for some years, and which was the best preventive of that constitutional melancholy which was ever lurking about him, ready to trouble his quiet."

In after years, with his natural, large kindness of disposition, Johnson retained a sympathetic interest in those six assistants of his. The elder of the two Macbeans fell at length into great poverty, and Johnson helped him by writing a preface to his *System of Ancient Geography*, and afterwards influenced Lord Thurlow in getting him admitted as a Poor Brother of the Charterhouse. He had Shiel, who was dying of consumption, to help him with his *Lives of the Poets;* and when Peyton died almost destitute, it was Johnson who paid his funeral expenses.

Whilst he was "tugging at his oar" and making steady headway with the *Dictionary*, Johnson sought recreation in founding one of his many literary clubs—an informal little club that met of evenings in Ivy Lane, Paternoster Row, and numbered among its members Hawkesworth, who succeeded Johnson as compiler of Parliamentary debates for the *Gentleman's Magazine*, and later edited and wrote most of a bi-weekly, *The Adventurer;* Dr. Bathurst, who with Johnson and Warton contributed to that *Adventurer;* and Hawkins, who in due course became one of Johnson's executors and biographers. He had pub-

lished his satire, *London*, eleven years before this; but it was whilst he was living in Gough Square, with the *Dictionary* in full progress, that he wrote and published his only other great satire, *The Vanity of Human Wishes*, with its references to the hope deferred, the hardships of his own life, and the obscurity and poverty from which he was but now gradually beginning to emerge :—

"When first the college rolls receive his name,
The young enthusiast quits his ease for fame;
Resistless burns the fever of renown,
Caught from the strong contagion of the gown:
O'er Bodley's dome his future labours spread,
And Bacon's mansion trembles o'er his head.
Are these thy views? proceed, illustrious youth,
And virtue guard thee to the throne of truth!
Yet should thy soul indulge the generous heat,
Till captive science yields her last retreat;
Should reason guide thee with her brightest ray
And pour on misty doubt resistless day;
Should no false kindness lure to loose delight,
Nor praise relax, nor difficulty fright;
Should tempting novelty thy cell refrain,
And sloth effuse her opiate fumes in vain;
Should beauty blunt on fops her fatal dart,
Nor claim the triumph of a lettered heart;
Should no disease thy torpid veins invade
Nor melancholy's phantom haunt thy shade;
Yet hope not life from grief or danger free,
Nor think the doom of man reversed for thee:
Deign on the passing world to turn thine eyes,
And pause awhile from learning to be wise:
There mark what ills the scholar's life assail,
Toil, envy, want, the patron, and the jail.
See nations slowly wise, and meanly just,
To buried merit raise the tardy bust.
If dreams yet flatter, yet again attend,
Hear Lydiat's life, and Galileo's end."

Had the Gough Square house been memorable only as the birthplace of the *Dictionary*, it would have been enough to have given it immortality; for, as Carlyle says (and Carlyle once went reverently over these rooms, and wrote a record of his visit), "Had Johnson left nothing but his *Dictionary*, one might have traced there a great intellect, a genuine man. Looking to its clearness of definition, its general solidity, honesty, insight, and successful method, it may be called the best of all dictionaries. There is in it a kind of architectural nobleness; it stands there like a great, solid, square-built edifice, finished, symmetrically complete; you judge that a true builder did it." But, still while the *Dictionary* was going on, shortly after the publication of *The Vanity of Human Wishes*, which yielded him £15, Garrick produced his tragedy of *Irene* at Drury Lane. It was a failure on the stage; the audience shrieked "Murder! murder!" when the bowstring was placed round the heroine's neck; but Johnson, feeling that a dramatic author should be more gaily dressed than it was his wont to appear, sat in a box on the first night in a scarlet waistcoat, with rich gold lace, and a gold-laced hat, and accepted his failure with unruffled calmness; and Dodsley paid him £100 for the right to publish the play as a book.

Still while he was in the thick of the *Dictionary*, he set himself, in 1750, to start *The Rambler*, and you may take it that he was sitting in his Gough Square study one night when he wrote that prayer before publishing his first number:—

"Almighty God, the giver of all good things, without whose help all labour is ineffectual, and

without whose grace all wisdom is folly; grant, I beseech Thee, that in this undertaking Thy Holy Spirit may not be withheld from me, but that I may promote Thy glory, and the salvation of myself and others. Grant this, O Lord, for the sake of Thy Son Jesus Christ. Amen."

His first number was printed on the 20th March 1750, and he issued it every Saturday and Tuesday afterwards for two years. "This," as Boswell has it, "is a strong confirmation of the truth of a remark of his, that 'a man may write at any time, if he will set himself doggedly to it'; for, notwithstanding his constitutional indolence, his depression of spirits, and his labour in carrying on his *Dictionary*, he answered the stated calls of the press twice a week, from the stores of his mind, during all that time; having received no assistance, except four billets in No. 10, by Miss Mulso, now Mrs. Chapone; No. 30, by Miss Catherine Talbot; No. 97, by Mr. Samuel Richardson; and Nos. 44 and 100, by Mrs. Elizabeth Carter." He was so pressed for time that he wrote a good many of the essays in such haste that he had no opportunity even to read them through again before they were printed. One thing that particularly gratified Johnson in connection with the *Rambler* was that his wife said to him, after she had read a few numbers, "I thought very well of you before, but I did not imagine you could have written anything equal to this."

Gough Square is hallowed, too, with sadder memories of Johnson's wife, for she died here in March 1752; and to the end of his days he never forgot her or ceased to sorrow for her. She was a plain-featured

woman some years older than himself, but he always spoke of her with a wonderful tenderness and love, and as of one who had been beautiful to look upon. How deeply he felt her loss is evident not merely from some of his sayings, but from his letters, and from those *Prayers and Meditations*, in which he set down his most intimate thoughts and feelings. After his death, this written prayer was found among his papers, dated in the month after her passing :—

"*April 26th, 1752, being after 12 at night of the 25th.*

"O Lord! Governor of heaven and earth, in whose hands are embodied and departed spirits, if Thou hast ordained the souls of the dead to minister to the living, and appointed my departed wife to have care of me, grant that I may enjoy the good effects of her attention and ministration, whether exercised by appearance, impulses, dreams, or in any other manner agreeable to Thy government. Forgive my presumption, enlighten my ignorance, and however meaner agents are employed, grant me the blessed influences of Thy Holy Spirit, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."

You may stand in the Square to-night, after twelve at night, when all the windows of all the other houses are dark, as they were in that night of 1752, and look up at the window in which the solitary light burned then, whilst, within, the grief-stricken Johnson sat alone in his study writing down that humble, mournful aspiration, and as you look the same light kindles there and glimmers desolately again for all who have eyes to see it. Nor was this the only record of his

sorrow that was written in that room, for you find these notes in his journal a year later :—

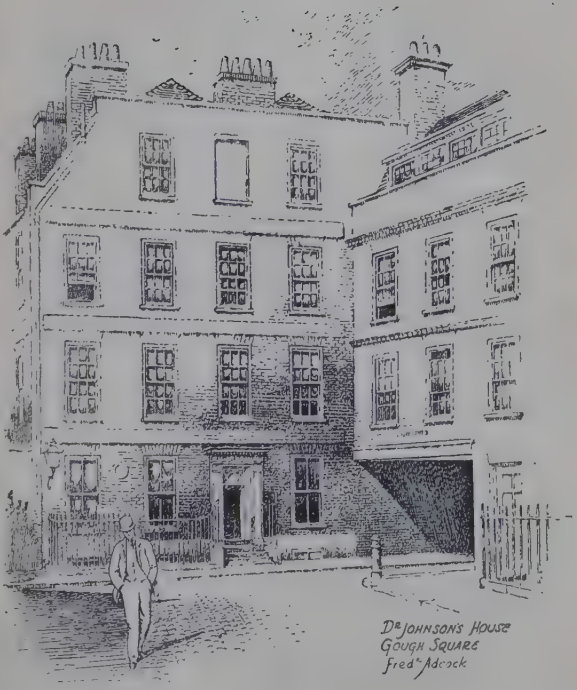
"*March* 28, 1753. I kept this day as the anniversary of my Tetty's death, with prayers and tears in the morning. In the evening I prayed for her conditionally, if it were lawful."

"*April* 23, 1753. I know not whether I do not too much indulge the vain longings of affection; but I hope they intenerate my heart, and that when I die like my Tetty, this affection will be acknowledged in a happy interview, and that in the meantime I am incited by it to piety. I will, however, not deviate too much from common and received methods of devotion."

Boswell tells us that he preserved her wedding-ring reverently as long as he lived, keeping it in "a little round wooden box, in the inside of which he pasted a slip of paper, thus inscribed by him in fair characters, as follows :—

'Eheu!
Eliz. Johnson,
Nupta Jul. 9°, 1736,
Mortua, eheu!
Mart. 17°, 1752.'"

Some thought of her, indeed, rises again and again thereafter in those *Prayers and Meditations* of his, and so makes this house peculiarly reminiscent of her. Before Mrs. Johnson's death, Mrs. Anna Williams had become a constant visitor at the house here. She was a poetess in a small way, daughter of a Welsh physician, and was in London having both her eyes treated for cataract. After his wife's death, Johnson gave Mrs. Williams accommodation in Gough Square


Dr Johnson's House
Gough Square
Fred.k Adcock

whilst her eyes were operated upon; and, the operation failing and complete blindness following it, with his usual big-hearted humanity he allowed her an apartment in this and each of his subsequent homes; and you remember Boswell's complaint of how his fastidious susceptibilities were outraged by the way in which she felt round the edges of the cups to see if they were full, when she presided over the tea-table. In the same spirit, Johnson gave house-room here also, and elsewhere, to that simplest and most kindly of medical practitioners, Dr. Robert Levett, on whose death, several years later, he wrote the best of his shorter poems.

You get a good idea of his general manner of life in Gough Square from the note that Boswell obtained from Francis Barber, Johnson's black servant, who wrote that on his wife's death Johnson was "in great affliction. Mrs. Williams was then living in his house, which was in Gough Square. He was busy with the *Dictionary*. Mr. Shiels and some others of the gentlemen who had formerly written for him used to come about the house. He had then little for himself, but frequently sent money to Mr. Shiels when in distress. The friends who visited him at that time were chiefly Dr. Bathurst, and Mr. Diamond, an apothecary in Cork Street, Burlington Gardens, with whom he and Mrs. Williams generally dined every Sunday. There were also Mr. Cave; Dr. Hawkesworth; Mr. Rydal, merchant on Tower Hill; Mrs. Masters, the poetess, who lived with Mr. Cave; Mrs. Carter; and sometimes Mrs. Macaulay; also Mrs. Gardiner, wife of a tallow-chandler on Snow Hill, not in the learned way, but a worthy good woman; Mr. (now Sir

Joshua) Reynolds; Mr. Miller; Mr. Dodsley; Mr. Bouquet; Mr. Payne, of Paternoster Row, bookseller; Mr. Strachan the printer; the Earl of Orrery; Lord Southwell; Mr. Garrick."

It was shortly after the conclusion of *The Rambler* that Johnson first made the acquaintance of Bennet Langton. He had taken lodgings in a house that was frequently visited by Dr. Levett; and, with Johnson's permission, Levett one day brought Langton to Gough Square, and, says Boswell:—

"Mr. Langton was exceedingly surprised when the sage first appeared. He had not received the smallest intimation of his figure, dress, or manner. From perusing his writings, he fancied he should see a decent, well-dressed—in short, a remarkably decorous philosopher. Instead of which, down from his bedchamber, about noon, came, as newly risen, a huge uncouth figure, with a little dark wig which scarcely covered his head, and his clothes hanging loose about him. But his conversation was so rich, so animated, and so forcible, and his religious and political notions so congenial with those in which Langton had been educated, that he conceived for him that veneration and attachment which he ever preserved."

In 1753 Johnson "relieved the drudgery of his *Dictionary*" by writing essays for Hawkesworth's *Adventurer*, and in this and the next two years did a lot of reviewing and varied hack-work for the magazines and miscellanies of his time; and in February 1775 he wrote that nobly scathing and touching letter to Lord Chesterfield, that is too well known to need reprinting, but must needs be reprinted here, because it was written from Gough Square, and would make

any house from which it was written an honoured and sacred place to all who value the dignity of literature and glory in the emancipation of the literary man from the condescending benevolence of the private patron :—

"My Lord,—I have been lately informed, by the proprietor of *The World*, that two papers in which my *Dictionary* is recommended to the public were written by your lordship. To be so distinguished is an honour which, being very little accustomed to favours from the great, I know not well how to receive, or in what terms to acknowledge.

"When, upon some slight encouragement, I first visited your lordship, I was overpowered, like the rest of mankind, by the enchantment of your address, and could not forbear to wish that I might boast myself *Le vainqueur du vainqueur de la terre*—that I might obtain that regard for which I saw the whole world contending; but I found my attendance so little encouraged that neither pride nor modesty would suffer me to continue it. When I had once addressed your lordship in public, I had exhausted all the art of pleasing which a retired and uncourtly scholar can possess. I had done all that I could; and no man is well pleased to have his all neglected, be it ever so little.

"Seven years, my lord, have now passed since I waited in your outward rooms, or was repulsed from your door; during which time I have been pushing on with my work through difficulties, of which it is useless to complain, and have brought it, at last, to the verge of publication, without one act of assistance,

one word of encouragement, or one smile of favour. Such treatment I did not expect, for I never had a patron before.

"The shepherd in *Virgil* grew at last acquainted with Love, and found him a native of the rocks.

"Is not a patron, my lord, one who looks with unconcern on a man struggling for life in the water, and, when he has reached ground, encumbers him with help? The notice which you have been pleased to take of my labours, had it been early, had been kind; but it has been delayed till I am indifferent, and cannot enjoy it; till I am solitary, and cannot impart it; till I am known, and do not want it. I hope it is no very cynical asperity not to confess obligations where no benefit has been received, or to be unwilling that the public should consider me as owing that to a patron which Providence has enabled me to do for myself.

"Having carried on my work thus far with so little obligation to any favourer of learning, I shall not be disappointed though I shall conclude it, if less be possible, with less; for I have been long wakened from that dream of hope, in which I once boasted myself with so much exultation,

"My lord, your lordship's most humble,

"Most obedient servant,

"SAM. JOHNSON."

A few months after this the *Dictionary* was finished. There had been many delays; it was long behind the stipulated time, and the patience of the publishers was exhausted; but at last Johnson sent the last sheets of the great work to Mr. Miller, the Strand

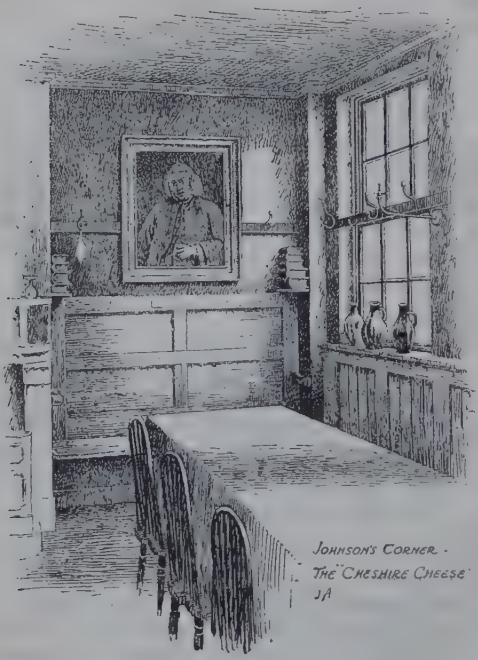
Where Boswell
first met Johnson
Fred^k Adcock

bookseller, who was chiefly concerned in the venture, and when the messenger returned from Miller's shop Johnson asked him, "Well, what did he say?" "Sir," answered the messenger, "he said, 'Thank God I have done with him.'" "I am glad," replied Johnson, with a smile, "that he thanks God for anything."

The publication of the *Dictionary* made him at once the most famous man of letters in London; but he had already spent the money that was paid for his labour, and had still to work hard with his pen to make "provision for the day that was passing over him." In 1757 he took up again a scheme for an elaborate edition of Shakespeare with notes, and issued proposals and invited subscriptions for it; but it was another nine years before his Shakespeare made its appearance. Among his many visitors in 1758, Dr. Charles Burney, the father of Fanny Burney, called and "had an interview with him in Gough Square, where he dined and drank tea with him, and was introduced to the acquaintance of Mrs. Williams. After dinner, Mr. Johnson proposed to Mr. Burney to go up with him into his garret, which, being accepted, he there found about five or six Greek folios, a deal writing-desk, and a chair and a half. Johnson, giving his guest the entire seat, tottered himself on one with only three legs and one arm. Here he gave Mr. Burney Mrs. Williams's history, and showed him some volumes of Shakespeare already printed, to prove that he was in earnest." They proceeded to criticise Shakespeare's commentators up there, and to discuss the controversy then raging between the friends of Pope and Bolingbroke in connection with an unauthorised publication of certain of Bolingbroke's

letters to Pope, who was recently dead. And in the April of this same year Johnson began to write his essays for *The Idler*.

Here, then, you have a varied and intimate series



of pictures, a sort of panoramic view of the life that Johnson lived in his Gough Square house, and amid his old surroundings are able to recreate him for yourself in all his varying circumstances and changing moods—working there at his *Dictionary* and his

multifarious writings; sorrowing for his wife; entertaining his friends; sallying forth morning and evening to walk along Fleet Street to the church of St. Clement Danes, in the Strand, assuming that he kept the resolution to do so that is entered at this date in his journal; and, almost every Sunday afternoon, coming staidly down the steps with Mrs. Williams, and setting out to dine with Mr. Diamond, the apothecary of Cork Street; on many evenings strolling along Wine Office Court, to forgather with friends in the parlour of the "Cheshire Cheese," where the seat traditionally occupied by him and Goldsmith is still to be seen; or going farther to a meeting of his club in Ivy Lane. There is a capital story told by Hawkins of how one night at that club a suggestion was made that they should celebrate the publication of Mrs. Lennox's first novel, *The Life of Harriet Stuart*, with a supper at the Devil Tavern, in Fleet Street. Johnson threw himself heart and soul into the proposal, and declared that they would honour the event by spending the whole night in festivity. On the evening fixed, at about eight o'clock, Mrs. Lennox and her husband, and some twenty friends and members of the club, gathered at the Devil Tavern, Temple Bar, and, by Johnson's orders, a magnificent hot apple-pie adorned with bay leaves formed a principal item of the menu. He himself crowned Mrs. Lennox with laurel; and, true to his resolve, he kept the feast going right through the night. "At 5 A.M.," says Hawkins, "Johnson's face shone with meridian splendour, though his drink had been only lemonade." The day was beginning to dawn when they all partook of a "second refreshment

of coffee," and it was broad daylight and eight o'clock before the party broke up, and Johnson made his way back up Fleet Street, round into Gough Square, and to the prosaic resumption of work on the *Dictionary*.

Soon after starting *The Idler*, Johnson left Gough Square and took rooms in Staple Inn, where he presently wrote *Rasselas* in the evenings of one week, and so raised £100, that "he might defray the expenses of his mother's funeral, and pay some little debts which she had left."

All these things had happened, and Johnson had risen into fame and become "the great Cham of letters," before Boswell had made his acquaintance. The historic meeting between these two did not come about until 1763, and then it took place at No. 8 Russell Street, Covent Garden—another famous house that is fortunately still in existence. It was then occupied by Thomas Davies, the actor, who had retired from the stage and opened a bookseller's shop there. He knew Johnson, who frequently visited him, and on his invitation Boswell was there several times in hopes of meeting the great man; again and again it happened that on the days when he was in waiting Johnson failed to appear, but in the end his patience was rewarded, and this is his own account of the interview, taken from notes he made of it on the very day of its occurrence:—

"At last, on Monday, the 16th of May, when I was sitting in Mr. Davies's back parlour, after having drunk tea with him and Mrs. Davies, Johnson unexpectedly came into the shop; and Mr. Davies, having perceived him through the glass door in the room in

which we were sitting, advancing towards us, he announced his awful approach to me, somewhat in the manner of an actor in the part of Horatio, when he addresses Hamlet on the appearance of his father's ghost: 'Look, my lord, it comes!' I found that I had a very perfect idea of Johnson's figure, from the portrait of him painted by Sir Joshua Reynolds soon after he had published his *Dictionary*, in the attitude of sitting in his easy-chair in deep meditation. Mr. Davies mentioned my name, and respectfully introduced me to him. I was much agitated; and recollecting his prejudice against the Scotch, of which I had heard much, I said to Davies, 'Don't tell where I come from.' 'From Scotland,' cried Davies roguishly. 'Mr. Johnson,' said I, 'I do indeed come from Scotland, but I cannot help it.' He retorted, 'That, sir, I find, is what a very great many of your countrymen cannot help.' This stroke stunned me a good deal; and when we had sat down, I felt myself not a little embarrassed and apprehensive of what might come next. He then addressed himself to Davies: 'What do you think of Garrick? He has refused me an order for the play for Miss Williams, because he knows the house will be full, and that an order would be worth three shillings.' Eager to take any opening to get into conversation with him, I ventured to say, 'O sir, I cannot think Mr. Garrick would grudge such a trifle to you.' 'Sir,' said he, with a stern look, 'I have known David Garrick longer than you have done, and I know no right you have to talk to me on the subject.' Perhaps I deserved this check; for it was rather presumptuous in me, an entire stranger, to express any doubt of the

justice of his animadversion upon his old acquaintance and pupil. I now felt myself much mortified, and began to think that the hope which I had long indulged of obtaining his acquaintance was blasted." But he sat on resolutely, and was rewarded by hearing some of Johnson's conversation, of which he kept notes, that are duly reproduced in the *Life*.

"I was highly pleased with the extraordinary vigour of his conversation," he concludes his account of the meeting, "and regretted that I was drawn away from it by an engagement at another place. I had for a part of the evening been left alone with him, and had ventured to make an observation now and then, which he received very civilly; so I was satisfied that, though there was a roughness in his manner, there was no ill-nature in his disposition. Davies followed me to the door; and when I complained to him a little of the hard blows which the great man had given me, he kindly took upon him to console me by saying, 'Don't be uneasy; I can see he likes you very well.'"

Davies's shop is kept nowadays by a Covent Garden salesman. Instead of being lined with books, it is filled with baskets of fruit and sacks of potatoes, and the parlour wall and that glass-panelled parlour door are thrown down, and parlour and shop are all one. But the upper part of the house remains practically unaltered, and with a little imagining you can restore the lower to what it was when these walls held the gruff rumbling of the Doctor's voice, and looked down on the humiliation of Boswell under the roguish eyes of Davies and his pretty wife.

Another house that has glamorous associations with

Johnson is No. 5 Adelphi Terrace, where Garrick lived, and where he died, in a back room on the first floor, in 1779. Two years later Johnson was one of a party that dined there with Mrs. Garrick, and one cannot do better than repeat the indispensable Boswell's report of the event :—

"On Friday, April 20, I spent with him one of the happiest days that I remember to have enjoyed in the whole course of my life. Mrs. Garrick, whose grief for the loss of her husband was, I believe, as sincere as wounded affection and admiration could produce, had this day, for the first time since his death, a select party of his friends to dine with her. The company was: Mrs. Hannah More, who lived with her, and whom she called her chaplain; Mrs. Boscawen, Mrs. Elizabeth Carter, Sir Joshua Reynolds, Dr. Burney, Dr. Johnson, and myself. We found ourselves very elegantly entertained at her house in the Adelphi, where I have passed many a pleasing hour with him 'who gladdened life.' She looked well, talked of her husband with complacency, and while she cast her eyes on his portrait, which hung over the chimney-piece, said that 'death was now the most agreeable object to her.' . . . We were all in fine spirits; and I whispered to Mrs. Boscawen, 'I believe this is as much as can be made of life.'" After recording the conversation of Johnson and divers of the others, Boswell goes on: "He and I walked away together. We stopped a little by the rails of the Adelphi, looking on the Thames, and I said to him, with some emotion, that I was now thinking of two friends we had lost who once lived in the buildings behind us, Beauclerk and Garrick.

'Ay, sir,' said he tenderly, 'and two such friends as cannot be supplied.'"

In the summer of 1784 Boswell was in London as usual, and saw Johnson, then an old man of seventy-five, for the last time. On the 30th June, he and Johnson dined with Sir Joshua Reynolds in Leicester Square, and when Johnson went home Boswell accompanied him in Sir Joshua's coach to the entry of Bolt Court, in Fleet Street, and was so affected at parting that he would not accompany him to the house, and they bade each other an affectionate adieu in the carriage. Johnson stepped out on to the pavement, and, walking briskly, vanished into the yawn of Bolt Court, and, for Boswell, into the jaws of death, for he never saw him again. He went home to the north two days after, and in December Johnson died.

On his annual visits to London Boswell lived in various lodgings; but in or about 1786 he rented a house, lately demolished, at 56 Great Queen Street, and brought his wife to town with him. They occupied this place for some two years; and it is evident from his letters to Bishop Percy and the Rev. T. W. Temple that, whilst residing there, he wrote most of the last seven years of his *Life of Johnson*. Boswell died in London, in 1795, at No. 122 (formerly 47) Great Portland Street.

CHAPTER VII

BLAKE AND FLAXMAN

Ten years before Boswell went to live at 56 Great Queen Street, William Blake was serving an apprenticeship to James Basire, the well-known engraver, whose house was close by at No. 31 in the same street. Basire's residence has gone the way of all bricks and mortar; but happily Soho still preserves the corner house at No. 28 Broad Street, in which Blake was born. He was born there on the 28th November 1857, over his father's hosiery shop, and it was there that the first of his strange visions came to him; for he used to say that when he was only four years old he one day saw the face of God at the window looking in upon him, and the sight set him a-screaming. When he was four or five years older, you hear of him taking long rambles into the country; and it was on Peckham Rye that other visions came to him. Once he saw a tree there "filled with angels, bright angelic wings bespangling every bough like stars"; and once, on a summer morning, he saw "the haymakers at work, and amid them angelic figures walking." In his matter-of-fact fashion he recounted the first of these two visions on his return home, and his mother had to intervene to prevent the honest hosier and conscientious Nonconformist, his father, from thrashing him for telling a lie.

At the age of ten Blake was journeying to and from the house in Broad Street to Mr. Paris's academy in the Strand, taking drawing lessons. He was already writing poetry, too, and before he was fourteen had written one of the most beautiful and glitteringly imaginative of his lyrics :—

"How sweet I roamed from field to field,
And tasted all the summer's pride,
Till I the Prince of Love beheld
Who in the sunny beams did glide.

He showed me lilies for my hair,
And blushing roses for my brow;
He led me through his gardens fair
Where all his golden pleasures grow.

With sweet May-dews my wings were wet,
And Phoebus fired my vocal rage;
He caught me in his silken net,
And shut me in his golden cage.

He loves to sit and hear me sing,
Then, laughing, sports and plays with me;
Then stretches out my golden wing,
And mocks my loss of liberty."

In a preface to his first published volume, the *Poetical Sketches*, which contains this lyric, his Spring, Summer, Autumn, and Winter verses, "My Silks and fine Array," and other lovely songs, he says that all the contents were "commenced in his twelfth, and occasionally resumed by the author till his twentieth year." From fourteen till he was twenty-one Blake was living away from home with his master, Basire, the engraver; then he went back to his father's, and commenced to study at the recently formed Royal

Academy, and in 1780 exhibited his first picture there, "The Death of Earl Godwin." Marrying in 1782, he set up housekeeping for himself at 23 Green Street, Leicester Square, and began to move abroad in literary society. Flaxman, already his friend, introduced him to Mrs. Mathew, a lady of blue-stocking tendencies, who held a sort of salon at 27 Rathbone Place; and here, in 1784, "Rainy Day" Smith made his acquaintance. "At Mrs. Mathew's most agreeable conversaziones," he says, "I first met the late William Blake, to whom she and Mr. Flaxman had been truly kind. There I have often heard him read and sing several of his poems. He was listened to by the company with profound silence, and allowed by most of his listeners to possess original and extraordinary merit." He knew nothing of musical technique, but sang some of his verses to airs that Smith describes as "singularly beautiful." His republican opinions and general unorthodoxy and daring outspokenness, however, did not make for social amenity, and it was not long before he dropped out of these elegant circles, and withdrew to his mystic dreamings and the production of paintings and poetry that the majority could not understand. A strangely beautiful and wonderful Bird of Paradise to break from the nest over that hosier's shop at the corner of Broad Street, Soho!

When his father died, in 1784, Blake's brother James took over and continued the business; and in the same year Blake himself opened the shop next door (No. 27) as an engraver and printseller, in partnership with James Parker, who had been one of his fellow-apprentices under Basire. Here he had his

younger brother, Robert, with him as a pupil; and he used to say that when Robert died, in 1787, he saw his soul ascend through the ceiling, "clapping its hands for joy." Falling out with Parker, Blake removed, in this year of his brother's death, to 28 Poland Street, near by, where he said Robert's spirit remained in communion with him, and directed him, "in a nocturnal vision, how to proceed in bringing out poems and designs in conjunction"; and the *Songs of Innocence*, published in 1789, was the result of this inspiration. The method, as Alexander Gilchrist has it, "consisted in a species of engraving in relief both words and designs. The verse was written, and the designs and marginal embellishments outlined on the copper with an impervious liquid. Then all the white parts, or lights (the remainder of the plate, that is), were eaten away with aquafortis or other acid, so that the outline of letter and design was left prominent, as in stereotype. From these plates he printed off in any tint required to be the prevailing (or ground) colour in his facsimiles; red he used for the letterpress. The page was then coloured up by hand in imitation of the original drawing, with more or less variety of detail in the local hues." A process of mixing his colours with diluted glue was revealed to him by St. Joseph. Mrs. Blake often helped him in tinting the designs, and it was her work to bind the books in boards. In the same year (1789) he put forth the finest of his long mystical poems, *The Book of Thel*.

Leaving Poland Street in 1793, Blake moved across London to Lambeth, and made himself a new home at 13 Hercules Buildings. Gilchrist, one of his earliest

biographers, made a mistake in his identification of this house, and it was for long erroneously believed that Blake's residence in that place had been pulled down. On a belated investigation of the Lambeth rate-books by the County Council authorities, however, it became clear that, instead of being on the west side of the street, as Gilchrist supposed, No. 13 was on the east side, next door but one to Hercules Hall Yard. Somewhere between 1830 and 1842 the whole road was renumbered, and Blake's house had become No. 63, and was in 1890 renumbered again, and became No. 23 Hercules Road, but is now no more. Whilst he lived here, Mr. Thomas Butts, of Fitzroy Square, became his most liberal and most constant patron; and on calling at Hercules Buildings one day, Mr. Butts says he found Blake and his wife sitting naked in their summer-house. "Come in!" Blake greeted him. "It's only Adam and Eve, you know." But Mr. Butts never took this as evidence of Blake's madness: he and his wife had simply been reciting passages of *Paradise Lost* in character.

At Hercules Buildings Blake did a large number of paintings and engravings, including the 537 coloured drawings for Young's *Night Thoughts*, and some of the greatest of his designs, such as the "Job" and "Ezekiel" prints; and here, too, he completed certain of his *Prophetic Books*, with their incomprehensible imagery and allegory, and what Swinburne has called their "sunless and sonorous gulfs." From Hercules Buildings also came "Tiger, tiger, burning bright, in the forests of the night," and the rest of the *Songs of Experience*. Then, in 1800, Hayley, the poet of the dull and unreadable

Triumphs of Temper, persuaded him to move into the country and settle down in a cottage at Felpham; from which, because he said "the visions were angry

with me at Felpham," he returned to London early in 1804, and took lodgings on the first floor of 17 South Moulton Street, Oxford Street.

Nevertheless, at Felpham he must have been work-

ing on his *Jerusalem*, and on *Milton, A Poem in Two Books*, for these were issued shortly after his arrival in South Moulton Street. He writes of *Jerusalem* in one of his letters: "I have written this poem from immediate dictation, twelve, or sometimes twenty or thirty, lines at a time, without premeditation, and even against my will"; and in a later letter, speaking of it as "the grandest poem that this world contains," he excuses himself by remarking, "I may praise it, since I dare not pretend to be any other than the secretary—the authors are in eternity." Much of *Jerusalem* is turgid, obscure, chaotic, and so impossible to understand that Mr. Chesterton declares that when Blake said "that its authors were in eternity, one can only say that nobody is likely to go there to get any more of their work." But it is in this poem that Blake introduces those verses "To the Jews," setting forth that Jerusalem once stood in—

> "The fields from Islington to Marybone,
> To Primrose Hill and Saint John's Wood,"

and that then—

> "The Divine Vision still was seen,
> Still was the human form divine;
> Weeping in weak and mortal clay,
> O Jesus! still the form was Thine.
>
> And Thine the human face; and Thine
> The human hands, and feet, and breath,
> Entering through the gates of birth,
> And passing through the gates of death";

and in *Jerusalem* you have his lines "To the Deists," the first version of his ballad of the Grey Monk, with its great ending:—

> "For a tear is an intellectual thing,
> And a sigh is the sword of an Angel King,
> And the bitter groan of a martyr's woe
> Is an arrow from the Almighty's bow."

For my part, I wish it were possible for some of our living poets to go again to those authors in eternity and get some more of such stuff as this, even if we had to have it embedded in drearier lumps of nonsense than you find in *Jerusalem*.

Blake's wife, daughter of a market-gardener, a woman so uneducated that she had to sign the marriage register with her mark, was not only an excellent housekeeper and domestic drudge, but was in perfect sympathy with him in his work, and had the greatest faith in his visions. Moses, Julius Cæsar, the Builder of the Pyramids, David, Uriah, Bathsheba, Solomon, Mahomet, Joseph, and Mary—these were among Blake's spiritual visitants at South Moulton Street. They came and sat to him, and he worked at their portraits, "looking up from time to time as though he had a real sitter before him." Sometimes he would leave off abruptly, and observe in matter-of-fact tones, "I can't go on. It is gone; I must wait till it returns"; or, "It has moved; the mouth is gone"; or, "He frowns. He is displeased with my portrait of him." If any one criticised and objected to the likeness he would reply calmly, "It *must* be right. I saw it so." In all probability he meant no more than that he conjured up these sitters to his mind's eye; but his friends took him literally, and he acquiesced in their doing so, and has been dubbed a madman in consequence.

Many times his wife would get up in the nights

BLAKE
23 HERCULES ROAD
FA

"when he was under his very fierce inspirations, which were as if they would tear him asunder, while he was yielding himself to the Muse, or whatever else it could be called, sketching and writing. And so terrible a task did this seem to be that she had to sit motionless and silent, only to stay him mentally, without moving hand or foot; this for hours, and night after night." It is not easy to realise that this burning, fiery spirit did once live in these South Moulton Street rooms, surrounded by his vivid and terrific imaginings, and then could pass out of it and leave it looking so dull and decorous, so ordinary, so entirely commonplace. But here he indubitably lived, so discouraged by neglect and hampered by poverty that he could not afford to issue any more large books like the *Jerusalem*, and in 1809 made a desperate attempt to appeal to the public by holding an exhibition of his frescoes and drawings on the first floor of his brother's hosiery shop in Broad Street. Very few visitors attended; but among the few was Lamb's friend, Crabb Robinson, and when he went he had the room to himself. He paid for admission, recognised that these pictures were the work of no ordinary artist, and bought four of the catalogues, one of which he sent to Lamb; and when, on leaving, he asked the custodian whether he might come again free, James Blake, delighted at having a visitor, and one, moreover, who had bought something, cried, "Oh yes—free as long as you live!" But the exhibition was a failure. The popular painters of Blake's day were Reynolds, Gainsborough, and men of their schools. Blake was born out of his time, and contemporary society had nothing in common

with him—no comprehension of his aim or his outlook—and dismissed him as an astonishing lunatic. When some drawings of his were shown to George III., his Majesty could only gaze at them helplessly and ejaculate a testy "Take them away! take them away!" The noble designs for Blair's *Grave*, and the frescoes of *The Canterbury Pilgrimage*, were among the important works done at South Moulton Street, which Blake quitted in 1821, making his last change of residence to 3 Fountain Court, Strand—a house kept by his brother-in-law, Baines. Here he occupied a room on the first floor for some six years, and when he was nearing his seventieth year, died, after a short illness, on Sunday, the 12th August 1827. He lay dying in his plain back room, serene and cheerful, singing songs to melodies that were the inspiration of the moment; towards evening he fell silent, and passed quietly away, a poor woman, a neighbour who had come in to sit with his wife, saying afterwards, "I have been at the death, not of a man, but of a blessed angel."

You have only to look at the portraits of Blake, at the broad forehead—the forehead of a revolutionary, as he himself said—the sensitive mouth, the large, intent, vision-haunted eyes, to know that his outward appearance fairly adequately revealed the manner of man that he really was. He was under five feet six in height and thick-set, but so well proportioned that he did not strike people as short. "He had an upright carriage," says Gilchrist, "and a good presence; he bore himself with dignity, as not unconscious of his natural claims. The head and face were strongly stamped with the power and character of the man.

There was a great volume of brain in that square, massive head, that piled-up brow, very full and rounded at the temples, where, according to phrenologists, ideality or imagination resides. His eyes were fine ('wonderful eyes,' some one calls them), prominently set, but bright, spiritual, visionary—not restless or wild, but with a look of clear, heavenly exaltation. The eyes of some of the old men in his *Job* recall his own to surviving friends. His nose was insignificant as to size, but had that peculiarity which gives to a face an expression of fiery energy, as of a high-mettled steed—a little *clenched* nostril, a nostril that opened as far as it could, but was tied down at one end. His mouth was wide, the lips not full, but tremulous, and expressive of the great sensibility which characterised him. He was short-sighted, as the prominence of his eyes indicated—a prominence in keeping with the faculty for languages, according to phrenologists again. He wore glasses only occasionally." His poverty forced him to study economy in the matter of dress. Indoors he was not slovenly, but generally wore a threadbare old suit, the grey trousers of which had been rubbed black and shiny in front like a mechanic's. When he walked abroad he was more careful, and dressed plainly but well, something in the style of an old-fashioned tradesman, in black knee-breeches and buckles, black worsted stockings, shoes that tied, and a broad-brimmed hat.

But for a memorable description of Blake in his habit as he lived, you must read this letter that was written to Gilchrist by Samuel Palmer, who knew him intimately in his latter years :—

"Blake, once known, could never be forgotten. . . .

In him you saw at once the maker, the inventor; one of the few in any age; a fitting companion for Dante. He was a man 'without a mask'; his aim single, his path straightforwards, and his wants few; so he was free, noble, and happy. His voice and manner were quiet, yet all awake with intellect. Above the tricks of littleness, or the least taint of affectation, with a natural dignity which few would have dared to affront, he was gentle and affectionate, loving to be with little children and talk about them. 'That is heaven,' he said to a friend, leading him to a window and pointing to a group of them at play.

"Declining, like Socrates, whom in many respects he resembled, the common objects of ambition, and pitying the scuffle to obtain them, he thought no one could be truly great who had not humbled himself 'even as a little child.' This was a subject he loved to dwell upon and to illustrate. His eye was the finest I ever saw; brilliant, but not roving, clear and intent, yet susceptible; it flashed with genius, or melted in tenderness. It could also be terrible. . . . Nor was the mouth less expressive, the lips flexible and quivering with feeling. I can yet recall it when, on one occasion, dwelling upon the exquisite beauty of the parable of the Prodigal, he began to repeat a part of it; but at the words, 'When he was yet a great way off his father saw him,' he could go no further; his voice faltered, and he was in tears.

"He was one of the few to be met with in our passage through life who are not in some way or other double-minded and inconsistent with themselves; one of the very few who cannot be depressed by neglect, and to whose name rank and station could

add no lustre. Moving apart, in a sphere above the attraction of worldly honours, he did not accept greatness, but conferred it. He ennobled poverty, and, by his conversation and the influence of his genius, made two small rooms in Fountain Court more attractive than the threshold of princes."

One of Blake's warmest friends for many years was the great sculptor, John Flaxman. With none of Blake's lawless, glowing imagination, Flaxman's drawings in his illustrations to Homer, and his designs on some of the Wedgwood pottery, have a classical correctness—a cold, exquisite beauty of outline—that are more suggestive of the chisel than of the pencil or the brush; and it is in the splendid sculptures with which he has beautified Westminster Abbey, St. Paul's, and many other of our cathedrals and churches that his genius found its highest expression. In his work as an artist Blake was largely influenced by Flaxman. They and Stothard used to meet at Mrs. Mathew's; but there came a day when the friendship between these three was broken. Blake thought Flaxman had appropriated one of his designs, and there seems no doubt that Stothard did so, on the prompting of an unscrupulous picture-dealer; and you have Blake lampooning them both, as well as Hayley, with whom he had also fallen out, in epigrams that were not always just, and probably represented nothing worse than a passing mood, as thus :—

"My title as a genius thus is proved:
Not praised by Hayley, nor by Flaxman loved."

"I found them blind, I taught them how to see,
And now they know neither themselves nor me."

To Flaxman.

"You call me mad; 'tis folly to do so,—
To seek to turn a madman to a foe.
If you think as you speak, you are an ass;
If you do not, you are but what you was."

To the same.

"I mock thee not, though I by thee am mockéd;
Thou call'st me madman, but I call thee blockhead."

Flaxman was not, like Blake, a born Londoner, but his family came from York, and settled down in London when he was six months old. His father had a shop in New Street, Covent Garden, where he made and sold plaster casts. Flaxman emerged from a sickly childhood, and developed into a sufficiently wiry and energetic man, though he remained feeble in appearance, so high-shouldered as to seem almost deformed, with a head too large for his body, and a queer side long gait in walking. He married in 1782, and, after living for five years in a very small house at 27 Wardour Street, Soho—where he was elected collector of the watch-rate for the parish—he and his wife went to Italy, and spent seven years in Rome. Whilst he was there he fulfilled a commission for Romney, and collected and sent over to England a selection of casts from the antique, that Romney required for the use of students in his Hampstead painting-room.

Returning from Italy in 1794, Flaxman took up residence at 17 Buckingham Street, Euston Road, and lived here through all his most famous years, till he died in 1826. Blake visited him here, and Haydon, and other of his artistic circle; for though he went little into society, he was unpretentiously

hospitable, fond of entertaining his chosen friends, greatly esteemed and beloved by his pupils, models, and servants, and the poor of the neighbourhood, especially the children. He went about among the latter habitually, filling his sketch-book with drawings of them, and invariably carrying a pocketful of coppers to drop into the small grubby hands that were ready to receive them.

The district hereabouts has degenerated since Flaxman's day. His house was dull, insignificant, rather mean-looking, and now it looks more so than ever, amid its grimy surroundings—a pinched, old, dreary little house, that is yet transfigured when you remember the glorious visitors who have crossed its threshold, and that it was at this same dead door the postman knocked one day near the end of September 1800 and delivered this letter from Blake, who was then newly gone out of London and had not had time to begin to grow tired of his cottage at Felpham :—

"Dear Sculptor of Eternity,—We are safe arrived at our cottage, which is more beautiful than I thought it, and more convenient. . . . Mr. Hayley received us with his usual brotherly affection. I have begun to work. Felpham is a sweet place for study, because it is more spiritual than London. Heaven opens here on all sides her golden gates ; her windows are not obstructed by vapours ; voices of celestial inhabitants are more distinctly heard, and their forms more distinctly seen ; and my cottage is also a shadow of their houses. My wife and sister are both well, courting Neptune for an embrace. . . .

"And now begins a new life, because another

covering of earth is shaken off. I am more famed in heaven for my works than I could well conceive. In my brain are studies and chambers filled with books and pictures of old, which I wrote and painted in ages of eternity before my mortal life; and these works are the delight and study of archangels. Why then should I be anxious about the riches and fame of mortality? The Lord our Father will do for us and with us according to His divine will, for our good.

"You, O dear Flaxman, are a sublime archangel—my friend and companion from eternity. In the divine bosom is our dwelling-place. I look back into the regions of reminiscence, and behold our ancient days, before this earth appeared in its vegetable mortality to my mortal vegetated eyes. I see our houses of eternity, which can never be separated, though our mortal vehicles should stand at the remotest corners of heaven from each other.

"Farewell, my best friend. Remember me and my wife in love and friendship to our dear Mrs. Flaxman, whom we ardently desire to entertain beneath our thatched roof of rusted gold."

Later, when they quarrelled, Flaxman was not an archangel, but a blockhead and an ass; but that quarrel is not to be taken too seriously. Their houses of eternity were not separated, though their mortal vehicles were estranged; and it was on hearing Flaxman was dead that Blake said finely, "I can never think of death but as a going out of one room into another."

CHAPTER VIII

A HAMPSTEAD GROUP

Out at Hampstead you may still visit what was once that studio of Romney's to which Flaxman sent his collection of plaster casts from Italy. It had been a favourite idea of Romney's, his son tells us, "to form a complete Gallery of Casts, and to open it to any youths of respectability," and in his closing years, after he had removed to Hampstead, he carried out his wish, to some extent, with Flaxman's aid, and had three pupils working in his studio there, copying the casts and studying under him. The house he occupied from 1796 to 1799 is now the Holly Bush Inn; he bought a piece of land at the back of it, and on this built himself a studio and gallery, which now form part of the Hampstead Constitutional Club. "It was to Hampstead that Hayley's friend Romney, the painter, retired in the decline of his life," writes J. T. Smith, in *Nollekens and his Times*, "when he built a dining-room close to his kitchen, with a buttery hatch opening into it, so that he and his friends might enjoy beef-steaks, hot and hot, upon the same plan as the members of the Beef-steak Club are supplied at their room in the Lyceum."

Though Romney was then in the decline of his life, he was at the height of his fame. He had married at the age of nineteen, and six years later set out for London, leaving his wife behind at Kendal. He had

no intention of deserting her, but in London his genius soon won recognition, he began to move in good

ROMNEY'S HOUSE
HAMPSTEAD
Fred^k Adcock.

society, and partly because Sir Joshua Reynolds had once said that "marriage spoilt an artist," partly because he became infatuated with Nelson's enchan-

tress, Lady Hamilton, he neither brought his wife to London, nor visited her, nor ever saw her again until he was dying. On April 28, 1799, Hayley called on him for the last time at Hampstead, and thought that "increasing weakness of body and mind afforded only a gloomy prospect for the residue of his life." Then in July Flaxman saw him, and says in one of his letters, "I and my father dined at Mr. Romney's at Hampstead last Sunday, by particular invitation, and were received in the most cordial manner; but, alas! I was grieved to see so noble a collection in a state so confused, so mangled, and prepared, I fear, for worse, and not better." Very soon after this Romney left London for ever, and returned to Kendal and the wife he had neglected since the days of his obscure youth, and early in 1801, by his directions, "the collection of castes from the antique, a very fine skeleton, and other artistic properties of George Romney, at his late residence, Hollybush Hill, Hampstead," were sold by Messrs. Christie.

Meanwhile, his wife had pardoned him and was caring for him. "Old, nearly mad, and quite desolate," writes Fitzgerald, "he went back to her, and she received him and nursed him till he died. This quiet act of hers is worth all Romney's pictures!—even as a matter of art, I am sure." It is this beautiful devotion of hers that gave Tennyson a subject for one of his later poems, *Romney's Remorse;* in which the dying painter, rousing out of delirium, says :—

> "There—you spill
> The drops upon my forehead. Your hand shakes.
> I am ashamed. I am a trouble to you,
> Could kneel for your forgiveness. Are they tears?

For me—they do me too much grace—for me? . . .
My curse upon the Master's apothegm,
That wife and children drag an artist down!
This seemed my lodestar in the Heaven of Art,
And lured me from the household fire on earth. . . .
This Art, that harlot-like,
Seduced me from you, leaves me harlot-like,
Who love her still, and whimper, impotent
To win her back before I die—and then—
Then in the loud world's bastard judgment day
One truth will damn me with the mindless mob,
Who feel no touch of my temptation, more
Than all the myriad lies that blacken round
The corpse of every man that gains a name:
'This model husband, this fine artist!' Fool,
What matters! Six feet deep of burial mould
Will dull their comments! Ay, but when the shout
Of His descending peals from Heaven, and throbs
Thro' earth and all her graves, if *He* should ask
'Why left you wife and children? for My sake,
According to My word?' and I replied,
'Nay, Lord, for *Art*,' why, that would sound so mean
That all the dead who wait the doom of Hell
For bolder sins than mine, adulteries,
Wife-murders—nay, the ruthless Mussulman
Who flings his bowstrung Harem in the sea,
Would turn and glare at me, and point and jeer
And gibber at the worm who, living, made
The wife of wives a widow-bride, and lost
Salvation for a sketch. . . .
O let me lean my head upon your breast.
'Beat, little heart,' on this fool brain of mine.
I once had friends—and many—none like you.
I love you more than when we married. Hope!
O yes, I hope, or fancy that, perhaps,
Human forgiveness touches heaven, and thence—
For you forgive me, you are sure of that—
Reflected, sends a light on the forgiven."

Another famous artist who is closely associated with Hampstead was John Constable. In 1820, writing to

his friend, the Rev. John Fisher (afterwards Archdeacon Fisher), he says, "I have settled my wife and children comfortably at Hampstead"; and a little later he writes, again to Fisher, "My picture is getting on, and the frame will be here in three weeks or a fortnight. . . . I now fear (for my family's sake) I shall never make a popular artist, *a gentleman and ladies painter*. But I am spared making a fool of myself, and your hand stretched forth teaches me to value what I possess (if I may say so), and this is of more consequence than gentlemen and ladies can well imagine." He was then living at No. 2 Lower Terrace, a small house of two storeys, and writes from that address, again to Fisher, on the 4th August 1821, "I am as much here as possible with my family. My placid and contented companion and her three infants are well. I have got a room at a glazier's where is my large picture, and at this little place I have many small works going on, for which purpose I have cleared a shed in the garden, which held sand, coals, mops and brooms, and have made it a workshop. I have done a good deal here." Lower Terrace is within a few minutes' walk of the Heath, the scenery of which appears in so many of Constable's paintings. He removed presently to Charlotte Street, Fitzroy Square; one of his pictures exhibited in the Louvre made him famous in France, and his fame was spreading in England when he went back to Hampstead in 1826, and after staying for a while at 25 Downshire Hill (which has since been rebuilt) was "at length fixed," as he wrote to Fisher, "in a comfortable little house at Well Walk, Hampstead. . . . So hateful is moving about to me that I could gladly exclaim,

'Here let me take my everlasting rest.' This house is to my wife's heart's content; it is situated on an eminence at the back of the spot in which you saw us, and our little drawing-room commands a view unsurpassed in Europe from Westminster Abbey to Gravesend. The dome of St. Paul's in the air seems to realise Michael Angelo's words on seeing the Pantheon—'I will build such a thing in the sky.'" In Constable's time the house was not numbered, but it has been identified as the present No. 40, and after his wife's death he kept it as an occasional residence until he died in 1837. He is buried not far from it, in the Hampstead Churchyard.

In the same churchyard is buried Joanna Baillie, who spent the last forty-five years of her life at Bolton House, Windmill Hill, opposite the Hollybush Inn, and here Wordsworth, Rogers, and Scott were

among her visitors. Other famous Hampstead residents buried in this churchyard are Mrs. Barbauld, who lived in Church Row, then near the foot of Rosslyn Hill, and died in John Street; Sir Walter Besant, who died at Frognal End, near the top of Frognal Gardens; and George du Maurier, who lived for twenty-five years in Church Row and at New Grove House, by Whitestone Pond, and dying in 1896, a year after he left Hampstead, was brought back here to be buried.

In the house at the corner of Prince Arthur Road and the High Street, that is now occupied by the Hampstead Subscription Library, Clarkson Stanfield made his home for many years. He did notable work as a landscape and sea painter and became a Royal Academician, but was best known and most successful as a scenic artist for the theatre, and brought the art of scene-painting to a higher level than it had ever reached before. His more ambitious pictures are in private collections, however, his stage scenery has had its day, and I suppose most of us remember him better as one of Dickens's most familiar friends. He painted the scenery for Wilkie Collins's play, *The Lighthouse*, when Dickens, Wilkie Collins, Mark Lemon, and others of their circle produced it at Tavistock House, and for other of the plays that Dickens staged there in his "smallest theatre in the world"; and Dickens's letters are sown with references to him. Writing to an American friend describing the Christmas sports he had been holding at his house, Dickens says he has purchased the entire stock-in-trade of a conjuror, and that "in those tricks which require a confederate I am assisted (by reason of his imperturbable

good humour) by Stanfield, who always does his part exactly the wrong way, to the unspeakable delight of all beholders. We come out on a small scale to-night" (31st December 1842) "at Forster's, where we see the old year out and the new one in." On the 16th January 1844 (putting *Martin Chuzzlewit* aside) he is writing to Forster, "I had written you a line pleading Jonas and Mrs. Gamp, but this frosty day tempts me sorely. I am distractingly late; but I look at the sky, think of Hampstead, and feel hideously tempted. Don't come with Mac and fetch me. I couldn't resist if you did"; and a month later, on the 18th February, "Stanfield and Mac have come in, and we are going to Hampstead to dinner. I leave Betsy Prig as you know, so don't you make a scruple about leaving Mrs. Harris. We shall stroll leisurely up to give you time to join us, and dinner will be on the table at Jack Straw's at four"; and in less than a month, on the 5th March, "Sir, I will—he—he—he—he—he—he—I will NOT eat with you, either at your own house or the club. But the morning looks bright, and a walk to Hampstead would suit me marvellously. If you should present yourself at my gate (bringing the R.A.'s along with you) I shall not be sapparised. So no more at this writing from poor MR. DICKENS." In June of the same year he sent Forster the proof of a preface he had written to a book by a poor carpenter named Overs, saying, "I wish you would read this, and give it me again when we meet at Stanfield's to-day"; and, still in the same year, "Stanny" is one of the friends he wishes Forster to invite to his chambers in Lincoln's Inn Fields

to hear a reading of *The Chimes* before it is published.

No part of London is richer in literary and artistic associations than Hampstead. At the "Upper Flask" tavern, later known as the "Upper Heath," Pope, Addison, Steele, Congreve, Hogarth and the other members of the Kit-Kat club used to meet in the eighteenth century, and Hogarth and Addison and his friends frequently resorted to the "Bull and Bush" at North End. Akenside lived for a while in Hampstead, and after he had left it went to stay occasionally with his friend Mr. Dyson at Golder's Hill, and was staying there in 1758 when he wrote his *Ode on recovering from a fit of sickness in the Country*, beginning :—

> "Thy verdant scenes, O Goulder's Hill,
> Once more I seek, a languid guest."

Gay often went to Hampstead to drink the waters, at the Pump Room, in Well Walk; Dr. Arbuthnot lived in Hampstead, where Swift and Pope were among his visitors; Fuseli lodged in Church Row; Dr. Johnson's wife spent some of her summer holidays at a cottage near the entrance to the Priory, and the Doctor would tear himself away from his loved Fleet Street to pass an occasional day or two there with her; and of recent years Robert Louis Stevenson stayed with Sidney Colvin at Abernethy House, Mount Vernon, and at that time Stevenson, who was then twenty-four, so far conformed to the proprieties as to go about in "a frock coat and tall hat, which he had once worn at a wedding."

Tennyson's mother had a house in Flask Walk;

when Edward Fitzgerald was in London, Tennyson introduced him to Dickens, and these three, taking Thackeray with them, drove out together to Hampstead Heath. Relics of Dick Turpin are preserved at the Spaniards Inn, a quaint, old-world hostelry that has in different generations entertained Goldsmith, Gainsborough, Sir Joshua Reynolds, Garrick

THE UPPER FLASK
FROM THE BOWLING GREEN
FA

and Constable, as well as Dickens and many of his familiars.

But more intimately than with any other of the immortals Hampstead has come to be associated with Keats and Leigh Hunt—with Keats in particular. He was born, a good Cockney, in Moorfields, over his father's livery stables, and in 1816 went to live with his brother Tom at No. 1 Well Walk, next door to the "Green Man," which has been succeeded by the Wells Tavern, and in his room here, on the 18th

November 1816, when he was one-and-twenty, wrote a sonnet *To My Brothers* :—

"Small, busy flames play through the fresh-laid coals,
And their faint cracklings o'er our silence creep
Like whispers of the household gods that keep
A gentle empire o'er fraternal souls.
And while for rhymes I search around the poles,
Your eyes are fixed, as in poetic sleep,
Upon the lore so voluble and deep
That aye at fall of night our care condoles.

This is your birthday, Tom, and I rejoice
That thus it passes smoothly, quietly :
Many such eves of gently whispering noise
May we together pass, and calmly try
What are this world's true joys—ere the great Voice
From its fair face shall bid our spirits fly."

In 1818 Keats moved to another part of Hampstead, and lodged with his friend, Charles Armitage Brown, a retired merchant, at Wentworth Place, now known as Lawn Bank, in John Street, which was the other day, for no sufficient reason, renamed Keats Grove. At that date Wentworth Place was divided into two houses, Brown renting one, and Wentworth Dilke occupying the other ; and when the Dilkes were away from home they left their house in the possession of Mrs. Brawne, her son, and two daughters, the elder of these daughters being the Fanny Brawne of Keats's piteous love romance. Though he finished the writing of it, and wrote the preface to it, on a holiday at Teignmouth, *Endymion* was published, and most of it had been written, whilst he was at Wentworth Place, and under this roof also he wrote his *Eve of St. Agnes*, *Isabella*, *Hyperion*, and the *Ode to a*

Nightingale. As every one knows, the publication of *Endymion* brought him little but ridicule and abuse from the reviewers; but, much as this must have wounded and mortified his sensitive nature, it was so far from being the cause of his death, as some sentimentalists said it was, that, as you may gather from his correspondence, it did not even discourage him. The *Quarterly* snubbed him as a copyist of Leigh Hunt, professed to find *Endymion* so tedious as to be almost unreadable, and saw nothing in it but "calm, settled, imperturbable, drivelling idiocy"; *Blackwood's Magazine*, referring to his having qualified as a surgeon, sneered "Back to the shop, Mr. John, stick to plasters, pills, ointment-boxes;" and the majority of critics were equally unappreciative. Byron dubbed him "a tadpole of the Lakes," and in divers letters to John Murray says, "There is such a trash of Keats and the like upon my tables that I am ashamed to look at them. No more Keats, I entreat. . . . Of the praises of the little dirty blackguard Keats in the *Edinburgh* I shall observe, as Johnson did when Sheridan the actor got a pension, 'What, has *he* got a pension? Then it is time that I should give up *mine*.' At present, all the men they have ever praised are degraded by that insane article. Why don't they review and praise *Solomon's Guide to Health?* It is better sense and as much poetry as Johnny Keats." After Keats was dead, Byron changed his opinions somewhat, and was anxious that his disparagements of him should be suppressed. "You know very well," he writes to Murray, "that I did not approve of Keats's poetry, or principles of poetry, or of his abuse of Pope; but as he is dead,

omit all that it said about him in any MSS. of mine, or publication. His *Hyperion* is a fine monument, and will keep his name"; and he added later, "His fragment of *Hyperion* seems actually inspired by the Titans, and is as sublime as Æschylus. He is a loss to our literature."

Keats was too fully occupied with the writing of other poems, with the glowing raptures and black despairs of his passion for Fanny Brawne, and the anxieties attendant upon the illness that was already wearing him down, to give overmuch of his thoughts to the attacks of his critics; moreover, he found consolation in the society and friendship of such men as Cowden Clarke, Wentworth Dilke (who founded the *Athenæum*), John Hamilton Reynolds, Haydon the painter, and Leigh Hunt, whom he frequently visited at that cottage of his in the Vale of Health, which ought never to have been demolished. For it was the meeting-place, too, of Keats and Shelley, and within it on one occasion, according to Cowden Clarke, Leigh Hunt challenged Keats, "then, and there, and to time," to write in competition with him a sonnet on *The Grasshopper and the Cricket*, and Keats finished his first. Passing a night there when he could not sleep, Keats wrote his *Sleep and Poetry;* and the cottage was rich, too, in rumours of such guests as Lamb, Hazlitt, and Coleridge.

Keats was introduced to Coleridge by Leigh Hunt. In 1816, when he was trying to cure himself of the opium habit, Coleridge went to live with Mr. Gilman, a surgeon, in a house that still stands in The Grove, Highgate, and walking with Hunt one day in Millfield Lane, which runs on the Highgate side of

the Heath, he chanced to meet Keats, and this is his own account of the meeting: "A loose, slack, and

KEATS HOUSE
HAMPSTEAD
Fred^k Adcock

not well-dressed youth met me in a lane near Highgate. It was Keats. He was introduced to me, and stayed a minute or so. After he had left us a little way, he ran back and said, 'Let me carry away the

memory, Coleridge, of having pressed your hand.' 'There is death in that hand,' I said when Keats was gone; yet this was, I believe, before the consumption showed itself distinctly." But another four years were not past when Hone, the author of *The Table Book*, saw "poor Keats, the poet of *The Pot of Basil*, sitting and sobbing his dying breath into a handkerchief," on a bench at the end of Well Walk, overlooking the Heath, "glancing parting looks towards the quiet landscape he had delighted in so much."

Perhaps the best descriptions of Keats in the last four years of his life are those given by Haydon, the painter, in his *Memoirs*, and by Leigh Hunt in his *Autobiography*. "He was below the middle size," according to Haydon, "with a low forehead and an eye that had an inward look perfectly divine, like a Delphian priestess who saw visions. . . . Unable to bear the sneers of ignorance or the attacks of envy, not having strength of mind enough to buckle himself together like a porcupine, and present nothing but his prickles to his enemies, he began to despond, flew to dissipation as a relief which, after a temporary elevation of spirits, plunged him into deeper despondency than ever. For six weeks he was scarcely sober, and to show what a man does to gratify his habits, when once they get the better of him, he once covered his tongue and throat as far as he could reach with cayenne pepper, in order to appreciate the 'delicious coldness of claret in all its glory'—his own expression." Leigh Hunt writes, "He was under the middle height; and his lower limbs were small in comparison with the upper, but neat and well turned. His shoulders were very broad for his size: he had a face

in which energy and sensibility were remarkably mixed up; an eager power, checked and made patient by ill health. Every feature was at once strongly cut and delicately alive. If there was any faulty expression, it was in the mouth, which was not without something of a character of pugnacity. His face was rather long than otherwise; the upper lip projected a little over the under; the chin was bold, the cheeks sunken; the eyes mellow and glowing, large, dark, and sensitive. At the recital of a noble action, or a beautiful thought, they would suffuse with tears and his mouth trembled. In this there was ill health as well as imagination, for he did not like these betrayals of emotion; and he had great personal as well as moral courage. He once chastised a butcher, who had been insolent, by a regular stand-up fight." (Tradition says this fight took place in one of the narrow courts out of the High Street, Hampstead.) "His hair, of a brown colour, was fine, and hung in natural ringlets. The head was a puzzle for the phrenologists, being remarkably small in the skull; a singularity he had in common with Byron and Shelley, whose hats I could not get on." Add to these a description given by one who knew him to Lord Houghton: "His eyes were large and blue, his hair auburn; he wore it divided down the centre, and it fell in rich masses each side of his face; his mouth was full, and less intellectual than his other features. His countenance lives in my mind as one of singular beauty and brightness; it had the expression as if it had been looking on some glorious sight."

The last two years of his life at Hampstead, with their quiet happiness, fierce unrests, passionate hopes

and despairs, are all wonderfully reflected in his letters of this period. He writes from Wentworth Place to John Taylor, the publisher, in 1818, setting forth his poetical creed and saying, with a clear perception of its defects, "If *Endymion* serves me as a pioneer, perhaps I ought to be content. . . . I have, I am sure, many friends who, if I fail, will attribute any change in my life and temper to humbleness rather than pride—to a cowering under the wings of great poets, rather than to a bitterness that I am not appreciated. I am anxious to get *Endymion* printed that I may forget it and proceed." There is a long letter to his sister in 1819, telling her of the books he has been reading, and describing his every-day life, beginning, "The candles are burnt down and I am using the wax taper, which has a long snuff on it—the fire is at its last click—I am sitting with my back to it, with one foot rather askew upon the rug and the other with the heel a little elevated from the carpet. I am writing this on *The Maid's Tragedy*, which I have read since tea with great pleasure. Besides this volume of Beaumont and Fletcher, there are on the table two volumes of Chaucer and a new work of Tom Moore's called *Tom Cribb's Memorial to Congress*—nothing in it." Reading this minute little sketch of himself, it is easy to picture him sitting late that night in his quiet room in Keats Grove; but it is the letters to Fanny Brawne that give this house, which was then two houses, its deepest and most living interest.

In 1819 he writes to her, whilst he is away holidaying in the Isle of Wight and she at Wentworth Place, "I have never known any unalloyed happiness for many days together; the death or sickness of some

one has always spoilt my hours—and now, when none such troubles oppress me, it is, you must confess, very hard that another sort of pain should haunt me. Ask yourself, my love, whether you are not very cruel to have so entrammelled me, so destroyed my freedom." And again, "Your letter gave me more delight than anything in the world but yourself could do. . . . I never knew before what such love as you have made me feel was; I did not believe in it; my fancy was afraid of it, lest it should burn me up." And again, "I have been in so irritable a state of health these two or three last days, that I did not think I should be able to write this week. . . . I have been, I cannot tell why, in capital spirits this last hour. What reason? When I have to take my candle and retire to a lonely room, without the thought, as I fall asleep, of seeing you to-morrow morning? or the next day, or the next—it takes on the appearance of impossibility and eternity. I will say a month—I will say I will see you in a month at most, though no one but yourself should see me; if it be but for an hour. I should not like to be so near you as London without being continually with you; after having once more kissed you, Sweet, I would rather be here alone at my task than in the bustle and hateful literary chitchat. Meantime you must write to me—as I will every week—for your letters keep me alive."

Back in London, making a short stay with Leigh Hunt, then living at College Street, Kentish Town, Keats sends to Wentworth Place a letter to Fanny Brawne, in the course of which he tells her, "My love has made me selfish. I cannot exist without you. I am forgetful of everything but seeing you again—my

Life seems to stop there—I see no further. You have absorbed me. . . . My love is selfish. I cannot breathe without you." Even when he is home again, in his own part of the Wentworth Place house, he is writing in February 1820, "They say I must remain confined to this room for some time. The consciousness that you love me will make a pleasant prison of the house next to yours. You must come and see me frequently : this evening without fail" ; and again, in the same month, "You will have a pleasant walk to-day. I shall see you pass. I shall follow you with my eyes over the Heath. Will you come towards evening instead of before dinner ? When you are gone, 'tis past—if you do not come till the evening I have something to look forward to all day. Come round to my window for a moment when you have read this."

In September of that year he set out on that voyage to Italy from which he was never to return, and whilst the ship was delayed off the Isle of Wight, he wrote to his friend, Charles Armitage Brown, at the old Hampstead address, "The very thing which I want to live most for will be a great occasion of my death. I cannot help it. Who can help it ? . . . I daresay you will be able to guess on what subject I am harping—you know what was my greatest pain during the first part of my illness at your house. I wish for death every day and night to deliver me from these pains, and then I wish death away, for death would destroy even those pains which are better than nothing. . . . I think, without my mentioning it, for my sake, you would be a friend to Miss Brawne when I am dead. You think she has many faults—but, for my sake,

think she has not one. If there is anything you can do for her by word or deed I know you will do it. . . . The thought of leaving Miss Brawne is beyond everything horrible—the sense of darkness coming over me—I eternally see her figure eternally vanishing. Some of the phrases she was in the habit of using during

my last nursing at Wentworth Place ring in my ears. Is there another life? Shall I awake and find all this a dream? There must be; we cannot be created for this sort of suffering."

Because of all this, and of the reiterated longings and the heartaches that Keats poured out in other letters that he wrote from Italy, and that were delivered here to Armitage Brown, I always feel that Wentworth Place is the saddest and most sacred of London's literary shrines.

CHAPTER IX

ROUND ABOUT SOHO AGAIN

As a general thing the literary man is not to be found living in the aristocratic quarters of the town until after he has done his best work and has begun to make money out of his inferior books. I don't think any man of letters has ever rented a house in Park Lane, except Disraeli, and he went there as a successful politician; such glorious thoroughfares are reserved to more respectable stock-brokers and company-promoters, whilst those whom the gods love are driven to seek refuge in the cheap and shabby houses of meaner streets. Half the squalid squares and byways of Soho are in reality vestibules and aisles of the Temple of Fame. Blake, as we have seen in a former chapter, lived in Poland Street; and in the same street lived Flaxman, and, later, Shelley. Dryden lived in Gerrard Street, a century before Burke made his home there; Hazlitt died in Frith Street; Mulready the painter had his studio in Broad Street; and the sculptor, James Northcote, resided for over thirty years in Argyll Place. When Madame de Stael was in England she stayed at 30 (now 29) Argyll Street, and Byron speaks of visiting her there. I have already referred to Sir James Thornhill's house in Dean Street; near by, in Soho Square, lived the actor, Kemble; and this square has pathetic memories

of De Quincey, who lodged for a time, under strange circumstances, at the Greek Street corner of it.

Left an orphan to the care of guardians who seem to have treated him with some harshness, De Quincey ran away from the Manchester Grammar School in 1802, when he was only seventeen, and after wandering through Wales made his way to London. Here for two months he was houseless, and seldom slept under a roof, and for upwards of sixteen weeks suffered " the physical anguish of hunger in various degrees of intensity." He tells you in his *Confessions* how he used to pace " the never-ending terraces " of Oxford Street, and at night sleep on some doorstep, and dream, " and wake to the captivity of hunger." In Oxford Street he fell in with that most innocent and tender-hearted of street-walkers, Ann, whose surname he never knew, and to whose compassion and charity he always felt that he owed his life : " For many weeks I had walked at nights with this poor friendless girl up and down Oxford Street, or had rested with her on steps and under the shelter of porticoes. She could not be so old as myself ; she told me, indeed, that she had not completed her sixteenth year. . . . One night when we were pacing slowly along Oxford Street, and after a day when I had felt more than usually ill and faint, I requested her to turn off with me into Soho Square. Thither we went, and we sat down on the steps of a house which to this hour I never pass without a pang of grief and an inner act of homage to the spirit of that unhappy girl, in memory of the noble action which she there performed. Suddenly, as we sate, I grew much worse. I had been leaning my head against her bosom, and all at once I sank from her arms and fell

backwards on the steps." He was so utterly exhausted that he felt he must have died, but with a cry of terror she ran off into Oxford Street and returned with port wine and spices which she had paid for out of her own pocket, at a time when "she had scarcely the wherewithal to purchase the bare necessaries of life;" and this timely stimulant served to restore him.

By-and-by, meeting a friend who lent him ten pounds, he travelled down to Windsor to see if he could get a certain friend of his family there to assist him; but before going he paid Ann something of his debt to her, and arranged that three nights from then, and every night after until they should meet, she would be at the corner of Titchfield Street, Soho. On his return to London he was at the appointed place night after night, but Ann never appeared, and though he inquired everywhere and searched the neighbourhood for her he was never able to see or hear of her again.

Earlier than this, however, and before he had succeeded in borrowing that ten pounds, the coming on of a bitterly inclement winter drove him to seek a wretched lodging at 61 (then 38) Greek Street, Soho Square. The house was a dirty, neglected, cheerless place, tenanted by a disreputable attorney named Brunell-Brown, who had a curious clerk named Pyment, and only came and went to and from his office by stealth because he was deep in debts and continually dodging the bailiffs. A few weeks of lodging miserably here nearly exhausted the little cash De Quincey had brought to London with him, and he had to give up his room. But he explained his position frankly to Brunell-Brown, and this kindly,

reckless rascal, who had a genuine knowledge and love of literature, and was interested in the young lodger who could talk to him intelligently on such matters, readily gave him permission to come to the house nightly and sleep gratis in one of its empty rooms, and allowed him, moreover, to eat the scraps from his breakfast-table.

The house had an unoccupied look, especially of nights, when the lawyer himself was usually absent. "There was no household or establishment in it; nor any furniture, indeed, except a table and a few chairs. But I found, on taking possession of my new quarters, that the house already contained one single inmate, a poor friendless child, apparently ten years old; but she seemed hunger-bitten, and sufferings of that sort often make children look older than they are. From this forlorn child I learned that she had lived and slept there for some time before I came; and great joy the poor creature expressed when she found that I was in future to be her companion through the hours of darkness. The house was large, and from the want of furniture the noise of the rats made a prodigious echoing on the spacious staircase and hall; and amidst the real fleshly ills of cold and, I fear, hunger, the forsaken child had found leisure to suffer still more (it appeared) from the self-created one of ghosts. I promised her protection against all ghosts whatsoever, but, alas! I could offer her no other assistance. We lay upon the floor, with a bundle of cursed law papers for a pillow, but no other covering than a sort of large horseman's cloak; afterwards, however, we discovered in a garret an old sofa-cover, a small piece of rug, and some fragments of other articles, which

De Quincey's House
Soho.
Fred^k Adcock

added a little to our warmth. The poor child crept close to me for warmth and for security against her ghostly enemies. When I was not more than usually ill I took her into my arms, so that in general she was tolerably warm, and often slept when I could not. . . .

"Meantime, the master of the house sometimes came in upon us suddenly, and very early; sometimes not till ten o'clock; sometimes not at all. He was in constant fear of bailiffs. Improving on the plan of Cromwell, every night he slept in a different quarter of London; and I observed that he never failed to examine through a private window the appearance of those who knocked at the door before he would allow it to be opened. He breakfasted alone; indeed, his tea equipage would hardly have admitted of his hazarding an invitation to a second person, any more than the quantity of esculent *matériel*, which for the most part was little more than a roll or a few biscuits which he had bought on his road from the place where he had slept. During his breakfast I generally contrived a reason for lounging in, and with an air of as much indifference as I could assume, took up such fragments as he had left; sometimes, indeed, there were none at all. . . . As to the poor child, she was never admitted into his study (if I may give that name to his chief depository of parchments, law writings, &c.); that room was to her the Bluebeard room of the house, being regularly locked on his departure to dinner, about six o'clock, which usually was his final departure for the night. Whether the child were an illegitimate daughter of Mr. Brunell-Brown, or only a servant, I could not ascertain; she did not herself know; but certainly she was treated

altogether as a menial servant. No sooner did Mr. Brunell-Brown make his appearance than she went below stairs, brushed his shoes, coat, &c.; and, except when she was summoned to run an errand, she never emerged from the dismal Tartarus of the kitchen, &c. to the upper air until my welcome knock at night called up her little trembling footsteps to the front door. Of her life during the daytime, however, I knew little but what I gathered from her own account at night, for as soon as the hours of business commenced I saw that my absence would be acceptable, and in general, therefore, I went off and sate in the parks or elsewhere until nightfall."

I have always thought that in all this there is something oddly reminiscent of Dick Swiveller and the Marchioness; the poor, half-starved little household drudge fits her part almost exactly, but De Quincey makes but a depressed and dismal Dick Swiveller; and Mr. Brunell-Brown seems to have been a lower type of the rascally lawyer than Sampson Brass was; but rascal as he was, one warms to him because of his kindness to his forlorn guest. "I must forget everything but that towards me," says De Quincey, "he was obliging and, to the extent of his power, generous." He goes on to say that in after years, whenever he was in London, he never failed to visit that house in Greek Street, and "about ten o'clock this very night, August 15, 1821—being my birthday—I turned aside from my evening walk down Oxford Street, purposely to take a glance at it; it is now occupied by a respectable family, and by the lights in the front drawing-room I observed a domestic party assembled, perhaps at tea, and apparently cheerful and

gay. Marvellous contrast, in my eyes, to the darkness, cold, silence and desolation of that same house eighteen years ago, when its nightly occupants were one famishing scholar and a neglected child. Her, by-the-by, in after years I vainly endeavoured to trace. Apart from her situation, she was not what would be called an interesting child ; she was neither pretty nor quick in understanding, nor remarkably pleasing in manners."

His London privations ended with a reconciliation between himself and his guardians, and he was sent to Oxford—his quarrel with them being that they would not allow him to go there.

De Quincey quitted Soho to go to Oxford, and Shelley, when he was expelled from Oxford in 1811, came to Soho. He travelled up to London on the coach with his friend Hogg. His cousin and sometime schoolfellow, Medwin, relates how before dawn on a March morning Shelley and Hogg knocked at his door in Garden Court, Temple, and he heard Shelley's cracked voice cry, in his well-known pipe, "Medwin, let me in. I am expelled," and after a loud sort of half-hysterical laugh repeat, "I am expelled," and add "for atheism." After breakfast they went out to look for lodgings, and, says Hogg, "never was a young beauty so capricious, so hard to please" as Shelley ; but the name of Poland Street attracted him because it suggested recollections of Thaddeus of Warsaw and freedom, and he declared "we must lodge here, should we sleep on the step of a door." A bill advertising lodgings to let hung in the window of No. 15, so they knocked and entered and inspected them—"a quiet sitting-room, its walls papered with trellised vine-leaves and clustering grapes," with a

similarly decorated bedroom opening out of it, and Shelley whispered, "We must stay here for ever."

"For ever" dwindled to something less than a year; but here for that time Shelley lived and resumed his interrupted studies, as far as might be, and was secretly supported by his sisters, who sent their pocket-money round to him by the hand of their schoolfellow, Harriett Westbrook, daughter of the retired tavern-keeper, John Westbrook, who was living near Park Lane, at 23 Chapel Street (now Aldford Street).

In April 1811 Shelley's father wrote insisting that he should break off all relations with Hogg and place himself under a tutor of his father's selection, and Shelley replied, from his Poland Street lodgings :—

"My dear Father,—As you do me the honour of requesting to hear the determination of my mind, as the basis of your future actions, I feel it my duty, although it gives me pain to wound 'the sense of duty to your own character, to that of your family, and feelings as a Christian,' decidedly to refuse my assent to both the proposals in your letter, and to affirm that similar refusals will always be the fate of similar requests. With many thanks for your great kindness,—I remain your affectionate, dutiful son,

"Percy B. Shelley."

His father presently relented so far as to make him an allowance of two hundred pounds a year. One evening in August, having arranged a hasty elopement with Harriett Westbrook, Shelley walked from Poland Street to a small coffee-house in Mount Street, and

SHELLEY
MARCHMONT STREET.
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as Dr. Dowden sets forth in his Life of the poet, dispatched a letter thence to Harriett, her father's house in Aldford Street being close handy, telling her at what hour he would have a hackney coach waiting for her at the door of the coffee-house. At the appointed time the coach was there in readiness, and a little behind time "Harriett was seen tripping round the corner from Chapel Street, and the coach wheels rattled towards the City inn from which the northern mails departed."

They travelled post-haste to the North, and were married in Edinburgh; and in another three years the deserted Harriett had ended her life in the Serpentine, and Shelley had gone off with Mary Godwin. Meanwhile, however, returning to London after his marriage to Harriett, Shelley stayed for a few days at the house of his father-in-law, and then at Cooke's Hotel, in Albemarle Street. On another occasion he lodged for a short time at a house still standing in Marchmont Street (No. 26), a drab and dingy thoroughfare in the neighbourhood of Russell Square.

Hazlitt was a Soho resident for no longer than about six months. In 1830 he came from his lodgings in Bouverie Street to occupy rooms at No. 6 Frith Street. He was then already failing in health, separated from his wife, harassed financially through the failure of his publishers, altogether broken and dispirited. Much disappointment, the thwarting of many of his highest personal ambitions, had soured and embittered him. Haydon calls him a "singular mixture of friend and fiend, radical and critic, metaphysician, poet and painter, on whose word no one could rely, on whose heart no one could calculate."

A critic of genius, a brilliant essayist; with not so great a heart as Lamb's but a finer intellect; he has never to this day received his full meed of recognition. He moves in spirit among the immortals as apart and unsociable as he moved among them in the body. "We are told," wrote P. G. Patmore, "that on the summit of one of those columns which form the magnificent ruins of Hadrian's Temple, in the plain of Athens, there used to dwell a hermit who scarcely ever descended from this strangely-chosen abode, owing his scanty food and support to the mingled admiration and curiosity of the peasants who inhabited the plain below. Something like this was the position of William Hazlitt. Self-banished from the social world, no less by the violence of his own passions than by those petty regards of custom and society which could not or would not tolerate the trifling aberrations from external form and usage engendered by a mind like his, . . . he became, as regarded himself, personally heedless of all things but the immediate gratification of his momentary wishes, careless of personal character, indifferent to literary fame, forgetful of the past, reckless of the future, and yet so exquisitely alive to the claims and the virtues of all these that the abandonment of his birthright in every one of them opened a separate canker in his heart, and made his life a living emblem of the early death which it foretokened."

Patmore, too, has given a good sketch of his personal appearance. "The forehead," he says, "was magnificent; the nose precisely that which physiognomists have assigned as evidence of a fine and highly cultivated taste; though there was a peculiar

character about the nostrils like that observable in those of a fiery and unruly horse. His eyes were not good. They were never brilliant, and there was a furtive and at times a sinister look about them as they glanced suspiciously from under their overhanging brows." Other contemporaries have described him as a grave man, diffident, almost awkward in manner, of middle size, and with eager, expressive eyes. S. C. Hall considered him mean-looking and unprepossessing; but though Talfourd speaks of him as slouching, awkward, and neglectful in his dress, he credits him with "a handsome, eager countenance, worn by sickness and thought."

But he was nearing the end of it all when he came to Frith Street. In August he was attacked with a violent sort of cholera, and never rallied from it. What was probably his last essay, one on "The Sick Chamber," appeared that same month in the *New Monthly*, picturing his own invalid condition and touching gratefully on the consolation and enjoyment he could still derive from books. Nearing the close, he begged that his mother might be sent for, but she was an old lady of eighty-four living in Devonshire and was unable to go to him. "He died so quietly," in the words of his grandson, "that his son, who was sitting by his bedside, did not know that he was gone till the vital breath had been extinct a moment or two. His last words were, 'Well, I've had a happy life.'" The same authority adds that he found the following memorandum, in the handwriting of his grandmother: "Saturday, 18th September 1830, at about half-past four in the afternoon, died at his lodgings, No. 6 Frith Street, Soho,

William Hazlitt, aged fifty-two years five months and eight days. Mr. Lamb, Mr. White, Mr. Hersey, and his own son were with him at the time."

He was buried within a minute's walk of his house, in the churchyard of St. Anne's, Soho, and his tombstone removed from its first position, stands back against the wall of the church: the stone originally bore a curious, somewhat militant inscription, but this has recently been obliterated, and replaced by one that offers nothing but his name and a record of the dates of his birth and death.

CHAPTER X

A PHILOSOPHER, TWO POETS, AND A NOVELIST

EVERYBODY has heard of *Sandford and Merton*, and hardly anybody nowadays has read it. I confess with shame that I am one who has not. But I have come across so many parodies of it and so many references to it in various books and articles that I am finding it more and more difficult to believe that I have not actually read the story itself. Mr. Barlow, the boy's tutor, lives in my mind as a large and solemn bore, but he was a bore of real knowledge; he was heavy with learning; and the boys themselves were dreadful little prigs, but underneath their priggishness they were manly boys, and there was something fine in their ideals of honour. No doubt they were largely modelled on their author, Thomas Day, who when he was a schoolboy started a fight with another boy on quite justifiable grounds, and soon finding that he completely outmatched his opponent, stopped the fight, and insisted on shaking hands with the other and making peace.

That incident, and the queer originality of his whole outlook on life, has made me more interested in Day himself than in his one famous book, and has made me number 36 Wellclose Square, the house

where he was born, among the London literary shrines that must not be overlooked.

Wellclose Square is in Shadwell, on the skirts of Whitechapel, and is one of those melancholy places that have obviously seen better days. Dreary and drab and squalid as you see it now, when Day was born there on the 22nd June 1748 it must have been a fairly select and superior residential quarter. Day's father was a collector of Customs who died a year after his son's birth, leaving him a very comfortable fortune of twelve hundred a year. The boy was educated at Charterhouse and at Oxford, and one way and another acquired lofty Stoic principles and a somewhat original philosophy that he lived up to obstinately all his life through, in spite of many rebuffs and a good deal of ridicule. He dressed carelessly, was indifferent to appearances, and scorned the "admiration of splendour which dazzles and enslaves mankind." He preferred the society of his inferiors because they were more unconventional, less artificial than the ladies and gentlemen of his own rank; he was awkward in the company of women, and regarded the sex with doubt as well as with diffidence. As you would expect of the man who wrote *Sandford and Merton*, he had no sense of humour; and his small-pox-pitted face and unattractive air and manner told so much against him that he was rejected emphatically by the first one or two women he proposed to. Withal, as was also fitting in the author of that fearsomely moral schoolboy-book, he was, in the words of his friend Edgeworth, "the most virtuous human being I have ever known."

I suppose he was a pioneer of the "simple life"

theory; anyhow, he persistently advocated simplicity in dress and living, and was determined to find a wife who shared these tastes, who should, moreover, be fond of literature and moral philosophy, "simple as a mountain girl in her dress, diet, and manners, and fearless and intrepid as the Spartan wives and Roman heroines." He was careful to state these requirements to the lady before proposing to her, and this seems to have spoilt his chances. The difficulty of discovering his ideal wife led to his making an odd experiment. He adopted two young girls, one from the Foundling Hospital, the other from the Shrewsbury Orphanage, and in deference to the proprieties formally bound them apprentice to his friend Edgeworth, and gave guarantees to the authorities that within one year he would make a decision between the two and pay a premium of a hundred pounds to apprentice one to a suitable trade, and send the other to be properly educated with the ultimate object of marrying her. The girls were about twelve years old. In order that they should not be influenced with wrong ideas by the people about them, he took them into France, where, as they only understood English, they could talk with nobody but himself; and there he proceeded to teach them reading and writing, and by ridicule, explanation, and reasoning sought "to imbue them with a deep hatred for dress, for luxury, for fine people, for fashion and titles, all of which inspired his own mind with such an unconquerable horror." In a letter which he wrote home about them he says, "I am not disappointed in one respect. I am more attached to and more convinced of the truth of my principles than ever. I have made them, in respect

of temper, two such girls as, I may perhaps say without vanity, you have never seen at the same age. They have never given me a moment's trouble throughout the voyage, are always contented, and think nothing so agreeable as waiting upon me (no moderate convenience for a lazy man)." Nevertheless, in France, the girls proved very quarrelsome; he had to nurse them through a severe attack of smallpox, and once when they were out boating they both fell into the Rhone, and he risked his life to save them.

Within the year, he brought them back to England and had made his choice. He apprenticed one, who was "invincibly stupid," to a milliner; and the other, Sabrina Sidney, he carried with him to a house he had taken near Lichfield and there "resumed his preparations for implanting in her young mind the characteristic virtues of Arria, Portia and Cornelia." But she disappointed him; he endeavoured in vain to steel her against shrinking from pain and the fear of danger. "When he dropped melting sealing-wax on her arms she did not endure it heroically; nor when he fired pistols at her petticoats which she believed to be charged with balls could she help starting aside or suppress her screams." She was not fond of science, and was unable to keep a secret satisfactorily; so after a year's trial Day sent her away to a boarding-school, and proceeded to pay his addresses to a young lady living in the neighbourhood, who first put him on a period of probation, and then, after he had made himself ridiculous in trying to dress and behave as she wished, rejected him.

Whereupon his thoughts turned again to Sabrina, who had a real affection for him; but her failure to

THOMAS DAY.
36 WELLCLOSE SQUARE
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obey him in certain small details of dress again displeased him, and finally deciding against her, he in the long run married a Miss Milnes. His one objection to this lady was that she possessed a considerable fortune, and would therefore probably refuse to live the simple life; but when he had categorically put his requirements to her, and she had consented to dispense with all luxuries, to cut herself off from social gaieties, and reside in the country with him, restricted in every way to the bare necessaries of existence, working and spending for the behoof of the poor and needy, he ventured to make her Mrs. Day, and never had occasion to regret it. Sabrina eventually married a barrister, but refused to do so until she had Day's consent; and when, after writing divers political, economic, and philosophical works that nobody hears of now, and *Sandford and Merton*, which nobody reads any longer, Day died of a fall from an unmanageable horse which he insisted could be controlled by kindness, his wife was inconsolable, and died soon after him of a broken heart.

So he must have been a man worth knowing, and, in spite of his peculiarities and his oppressive earnestness, more likeable than most of us, when you knew him. Anyhow, he thought for himself, and had opinions of his own, and was not afraid to act upon them. And such men are so uncommonly rare that I think the County Council should put a tablet on the face of his birthplace at once, for the encouragement of all men who are something more than cheap copies of their neighbours.

Across the other side of London, at 24 (then 16) Holles Street, Cavendish Square, Lord Byron was

born, on 22nd January 1788—a very different man, but also unconventional, though in more conventional ways. But the house here has been considerably altered to suit the requirements of the big drapery establishment that at present occupies it, and of Byron's various residences in London I believe the only one that survives in its original condition is that at No. 4 Bennet Street, St. James's. Here he had rooms on the first floor in 1813 and the early months of 1814, and it was in those rooms that he wrote *The Giaour*, *The Bride of Abydos*, and *The Corsair*. Writing to Moore from here on the 28th July 1813, he says, "I am training to dine with Sheridan and Rogers this evening"; and in the Diary he was keeping at this time he notes, on 16th November 1813, "Read Burns to-day. What would he have been, if a patrician? We should have had more polish—less force—just as much verse but no immortality—a divorce and duel or two, the which had he survived, as his potations must have been less spirituous, he might have lived as long as Sheridan, and outlived as much as poor Brinsley."

From Bennet Street Byron carried on a correspondence with the lady he was destined to marry, Miss Anna Isabella Milbanke. "I look upon myself," he tells her in one of his letters, "as a very facetious personage, and may appeal to most of my acquaintance in proof of my assertion. Nobody laughs more, and though your friend Joanna Baillie says somewhere that 'Laughter is the child of misery,' I do not believe her (unless indeed a hysteric), though I think it is sometimes the parent." In another of the same September 1813, evidently replying to one of hers,

he protests: "'Gay' but not 'content'—very true. . . . You have detected a laughter 'false to the heart'—allowed—yet I have been tolerably sincere with you, and I fear sometimes troublesome." In November he writes to her, "I perceive by part of your last letter that you are still inclined to believe me a gloomy personage. Those who pass so much of their time entirely alone can't be always in very high spirits; yet I don't know—though I certainly do enjoy society to a certain extent, I never passed two hours in mixed company without wishing myself out of it again. Still, I look upon myself as a facetious companion, well reputed by all the wits at whose jests I readily laugh, and whose repartees I take care never to incur by any kind of contest—for which I feel as little qualified as I do for the more solid pursuits of demonstration."

As for his gloom or gaiety, Sir Walter Scott, who lunched with him and Charles Mathews at Long's Hotel, in Old Bond Street, in 1815, said, "I never saw Byron so full of fun, frolic, wit, and whim: he was as playful as a kitten." Again, writing in his Journal, after Byron's death, Sir Walter observes, "What I liked about Byron, besides his boundless genius, was his generosity of spirit as well as purse, and his utter contempt of all affectations of literature, from the school-magisterial style to the lackadaisical"; and he relates an anecdote in illustration of Byron's extreme sensitiveness: "Like Rousseau, he was apt to be very suspicious, and a plain, downright steadiness of manner was the true mode to maintain his good opinion. Will Rose told me that once, while sitting with Byron, he fixed insensibly his eyes on his feet,

one of which, it must be remembered, was deformed. Looking up suddenly, he saw Byron regarding him with a look of concentrated and deep displeasure, which wore off when he observed no consciousness or embarrassment in the countenance of Rose. Murray afterwards explained this by telling Rose that Lord Byron was very jealous of having this personal imperfection noticed or attended to." He goes on to say that Byron was a mischief-maker; he would tell one man the unpleasant things that had been privately said of him by another; and he loved to mystify people, "to be thought awful, mysterious and gloomy, and sometimes hinted at strange causes."

So that if he had no literary affectations he clearly cultivated a pose of mysterious misery both in his life and his poetry, and this it was that exasperated Carlyle into calling him "the teeth-grinding, glass-eyed, lone Caloyer." And the pose was helped out by his handsome and romantic appearance. "Byron's countenance is a thing to dream of," Scott told Lockhart. "A certain fair lady whose name has been too often mentioned in connection with his told a friend of mine that when she first saw Byron it was in a crowded room, and she did not know who it was, but her eyes were instantly nailed, and she said to herself, 'That pale face is my fate.' And, poor soul, if a god-like face and god-like powers could have made excuse for devilry, to be sure she had one." He said on the same occasion, "As for poets, I have seen, I believe, all the best of our own time and country—and, though Burns had the most glorious eyes imaginable, I never thought any of them would come up to an artist's notion of the character except Byron." Mrs. Opie

Byron
4 Bennet Street
St James's
Fred^k Adcock

said, "His voice was such a voice as the devil tempted Eve with"; and Charles Mathews once remarked that "he was the only man I ever contemplated to whom I felt disposed to apply the word beautiful."

Nevertheless, for a while Miss Milbanke was proof against his fascinations. In November 1813, about the date of that last letter of his to her from which I have quoted, he offered her his hand and was rejected. He proposed to another lady in the following September, and was rejected again, and almost immediately afterwards he called on Miss Milbanke at her father's house, 29 Portland Place, and in the library there passionately renewed his suit, and this time was successful. They were married in January 1815, and went to live at 13 Piccadilly, and in January of the next year, after twelve months of little happiness and much wretchedness, separated for good, a month after the birth of their child.

This Piccadilly house has been pulled down. The Albany to which Byron removed in 1814, and which he left on his marriage, still remains; and so, too, does No. 8 St. James's Street, where he lived in 1809, when his *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers* took the town by storm, but it has undergone so much alteration that it no longer seems so intimately reminiscent of Byron as Bennet Street does.

Whilst Byron was residing in St. James's Street, publishing the *English Bards* and writing the first canto of *Childe Harold*, Coleridge was living in a house at Portland Place, Hammersmith, that is now known as No. 7 Addison Bridge Place. Somehow, one does not readily connect Coleridge with London, even though he had lodged for many years at Highgate

before he died there. But one time and another he spent quite a large part of his life in the metropolis. He was at school with Lamb, of course, at Christ's Hospital; and are not Lamb's letters strewn with yearning remembrances of the glorious evenings he and Coleridge and Hazlitt and others passed, in later years, in the smoky parlour of "The Salutation and Cat," in Newgate Street? At various dates, he lived at Buckingham Street, and at Norfolk Street, Strand, in Pall Mall, and in King Street, Covent Garden, when he was working on the staff of the *Morning Post;* to say nothing of visits to London when he put up at one or another of Lamb's many homes in the City; and there is still in one of the courts of Fetter Lane that Newton Hall where he delivered a series of lectures in 1818.

By 1810, when he came to London and settled for a period at 7 Addison Bridge Place, Coleridge had done all his great work as a poet, and under stress of financial difficulties was turning more and more from poetry to lecturing and journalism as sources of income. There is a letter of Lamb's to Hazlitt, dated 28th November 1810, when Hazlitt was holidaying and working at Winterslow, in which he mentions towards the close—"Coleridge is in town, or at least at Hammersmith. He is writing or going to write in the *Courier* against Cobbett and in favour of paper money." Byron wrote to a friend in the succeeding year, "Coleridge is lecturing. 'Many an old fool,' said Hannibal to some such lecturer, 'but such as this, never'"; and to the same friend two days later, "Coleridge has been lecturing against Campbell. Rogers was present, and from him I derive the infor-

mation. We are going to make a party to hear this Manichean of poesy"; and on the same day to another friend, "Coleridge has attacked the *Pleasures of Hope*, and all other pleasures whatsoever. Mr. Rogers was present, and heard himself indirectly *rowed* by the lecturer"; and next week, "To-morrow I dine with Rogers, and am to hear Coleridge, who is a kind of rage at present."

Coleridge was then only thirty-eight, and had another twenty-four years of life before him. He was already, and had for long past, been struggling in the toils of the opium habit, and his poetical inspiration was leaving him, for though *Christabel* and *Kubla Khan* were not published until 1816 they were written nearly ten years before. There are a number of minor poems bearing later dates; several in 1809, many long after that, but only one dated 1810, which may be supposed to have been written in that Hammersmith house, and this is nothing but a respectable translation of a passage in Ottfried's metrical paraphrase of the Gospels. But his lectures were a wonder and a delight, Byron's disapproval notwithstanding. He was always an eloquent preacher, and became a chief among lecturers as he did among poets. "Have you ever heard me preach?" he asked Lamb, and Lamb replied with his whimsical stammer, "I never heard you do anything else!" But you remember that fine essay of Hazlitt's in which he recounts his first acquaintance with Coleridge?—how he rose before daylight and walked ten miles in the mud to hear him preach. "When I got there, the organ was playing the hundredth psalm, and when it was done Mr. Coleridge rose and gave out his text, 'And

he went up into the mountain to pray, HIMSELF, ALONE.' As he gave out his text his voice 'rose like a steam of rich distilled perfumes,' and when he came to the two last words, which he pronounced loud, deep, and distinct, it seemed to me, who was then young, as if the sounds had echoed from the bottom of the human heart, and as if that prayer might have floated in solemn silence through the universe." He describes the sermon, and goes on, "I could not have been more delighted if I had heard the music of the spheres. Poetry and Philosophy had met together. . . . I returned home well satisfied." Then Coleridge called to see his father, a dissenting minister in the neighbourhood, and for two hours he talked and Hazlitt listened spellbound, and when he went, Hazlitt walked with him six miles on the road. "It was a fine morning," he says, "in the middle of winter, and he talked the whole way." And with what a fine generosity he acknowledges what that meeting and this talk of Coleridge's had meant to him. "I was stunned, startled with it as from a deep sleep. . . . I was at that time dumb, inarticulate, helpless, like a worm by the wayside, crushed, bleeding, lifeless; but now, bursting the deadly bands that bound them—

'With Styx nine times round them,'

my ideas float on winged words, and as they expand their plumes catch the golden light of other years. My soul has indeed remained in its original bondage, dark, obscure, with longings infinite and unsatisfied; my heart, shut up in the prison-house of this rude clay, has never found nor will it ever find a heart to

speak to; but that my understanding also did not remain dumb and brutish, or at length found a language to express itself, I owe to Coleridge." That was when Coleridge was twenty-six and Hazlitt twenty. These twelve years after that, when Coleridge was lecturing in London, his fancy and imagination were as dazzling and as powerful as ever, and his voice and language had lost none of their magic. But his thoughts were perhaps tending towards that transcendental obscurity that reached its worst when he was established in his closing days at Highgate, with his little group of worshipping disciples around him, and when Carlyle went to hear and to ridicule him. Anyhow, here is an account Rogers gives of a visit he paid to him when he had transferred himself from Hammersmith to Pall Mall:—

"Coleridge was a marvellous talker. One morning when Hookham Frere also breakfasted with me, Coleridge talked for three hours without intermission, about poetry, and so admirably that I wish every word he uttered had been written down. But sometimes his harangues were quite unintelligible, not only to myself, but to others. Wordsworth and I called upon him one afternoon, when he was in a lodging off Pall Mall. He talked uninterruptedly for about two hours, during which Wordsworth listened to him with profound attention, every now and then nodding his head, as if in assent. On quitting the lodgings I said to Wordsworth, 'Well, for my part, I could not make head or tail of Coleridge's oration; pray did you understand it?' 'Not one syllable of it,' was Wordsworth's reply."

He talked like one inspired, but his looks, except

whilst he was talking, belied him. "My face," he said justly of himself, "unless when animated by immediate eloquence, expresses great sloth and great, indeed almost idiotic, good nature. 'Tis a mere carcase of a face, flat, flabby, and expressive chiefly of unexpression. Yet I am told that my eye, eyebrows, and forehead are physiognomically good." De Quincey says there was a peculiar haze or dimness mixed with the light of his eyes; and when he was roused to animation Lamb thought he looked like "an archangel a little damaged." But whether that haze of his eyes got into his talk, whether his thoughts were obscurely uttered, or whether it was they were too high and great for his auditors to take in so easily as a listener expects to grasp what is said to him is, at least, an open question. It may well be that Shelley hit the truth in the *Letter to Maria Gisborne* that he wrote from Leghorn, in 1820 :—

> "You will see Coleridge; he who sits obscure
> In the exceeding lustre and the pure
> Intense irradiation of a mind
> Which, with its own internal lightnings blind,
> Flags wearily through darkness and despair—
> A cloud-encircled meteor of the air,
> A hooded eagle among blinking owls."

CHAPTER XI

CHARLES LAMB

At one of those free-and-easy sociable gatherings in Lamb's rooms, in the Temple, which Hazlitt has so happily immortalised, Lamb provoked some discussion by asking which of all the English literary men of the past one would most wish to have seen and known. Ayrton, who was of the company, said he would choose the two greatest names in English literature—Sir Isaac Newton and John Locke. "Every one burst out laughing," writes Hazlitt, "at the expression of Lamb's face, in which impatience was restrained by courtesy. 'Yes, the greatest names,' he stammered out hastily, 'but they were not persons—not persons. . . . There is nothing personally interesting in the men.'" It is Lamb's glory that he is both a great name and a great and interesting personality; and if his question were put again to-day in any company of book-lovers I should not be alone in saying at once that the writer of the past I would soonest have seen and known is Charles Lamb.

It is difficult to write of him without letting your enthusiasm run away with you. Except for a few reviewers of his own day (and the reviewers of one's own day count for little or nothing the day after), nobody who knew Lamb in his life or has come to know him through his books and the books that tell

of him has been able to write of him except with warmest admiration and affection. Even so testy and difficult a man as Landor, who only saw Lamb once, could not touch on his memory without profound emotion, and says in some memorial verses :—

> "Of all that ever wore man's form, 'tis thee
> I first would spring to at the gates of heaven."

And you remember Wordsworth's—

> "O, he was good, if e'er a good man lived!"

There is, too, that well-known anecdote of how Thackeray lifted a volume of *Elia* and held it against his forehead and murmured "St. Charles!" All which, and many other utterances of love and reverence for his personal character, particularly Wordsworth's reference to him as "Lamb, the frolic and the gentle," would have exasperated Lamb himself and moved him to angry protest. "I have had the *Anthology*," he wrote to Coleridge in 1800, "and like only one thing in it, 'Lewti'; but of that the last stanza is detestable, the rest most exquisite: the epithet 'enviable' would dash the finest poem. For God's sake (I never was more serious) don't make me ridiculous any more by terming me gentle-hearted in print, or do it in better verses. It did well enough five years ago when I came to see you, and was moral coxcomb enough at the time you wrote the lines to feed upon such epithets; but besides that the meaning of 'gentle' is equivocal at best, and almost always means poor-spirited, the very quality of gentleness is abhorrent to such vile trumpetings. My sentiment has long since vanished. I hope my virtues have done sucking.

I can scarce think but you meant it in joke. I hope you did, for I should be ashamed to believe that you could think to gratify me by such praise, fit only to be a cordial to some green-sick sonneteer." The epithet so rankled in his recollection that a week later he returned to the topic. "In the next edition of the *Anthology* (which Phœbus avert, and those nine other wandering maids also!) please to blot out 'gentle-hearted,' and substitute 'drunken dog, ragged head, seld-shaven, odd-eyed, stuttering,' or any other epithet which truly and properly belongs to the gentleman in question. And for Charles read Tom, or Bob, or Richard for mere delicacy."

Gentle Lamb certainly was, but the word is not large enough or robustly human enough to cover all his character. He wins your regard by his faults as well as by his virtues. If he drank a little too much at times, and sometimes talked and wrote foolishly and too flippantly to please the serious-minded, he far more often talked and wrote wisely, wittily, exquisitely, and for thirty-eight years of his life he readily sacrificed himself to his sister's well-being, giving up all thought of marriage that he might be her constant guardian and attendant, watching dreadfully for signs of her recurring fits of insanity, and when they were coming upon her going with her to the melancholy gate of the asylum, and directly her mind was cleared, returning eagerly to fetch her home again.

He was never in the habit of laying himself out to create a good impression on strangers; if they were unsympathetic, or he did not take to them, in his freakish fashion he would deliberately say and do

things to shock and antagonise them, and so it came about that those who did not know him or could not appreciate him frequently set him down as "something between an imbecile, a brute, and a buffoon." Carlyle formed that sort of impression of him; and one can believe there was scarcely any point of contact between Carlyle's sombre, deadly earnest, man-with-a-message outlook and the tricksy, elvish, quaintly humorous spirit of Lamb, who wrote with a delicate fancy and tenderness that are more lasting than Carlyle's solid preachings are likely to prove, and who "stuttered his quaintness in snatches," says Haydon, "like the fool in *Lear*, and with equal beauty."

That is a fine and wonderful glimpse of one side of Lamb given by Leigh Hunt when he says he could have imagined him "cracking a joke in the teeth of a ghost, and then melting into thin air himself out of sympathy with the awful." In describing him, most of his friends emphasise "the bland, sweet smile, with a touch of sadness in it." "A light frame, so fragile that it seemed as if a breath would overthrow it," is Talfourd's picture of him, "clad in clerk-like black, and surmounted by a head of form and expression the most noble and sweet. His black hair curled crisply about an expanded forehead; his eyes, softly brown, twinkled with varying expression, though the prevalent feeling was sad; and the nose slightly curved, and delicately carved at the nostril, with the lower outline of the face regularly oval, completed a head which was finely placed on the shoulders, and gave importance and even dignity to a diminutive and shadowy stem. Who shall describe his countenance, catch its quivering sweetness, and fix it for ever in words?

There are none, alas, to answer the vain desire of friendship. Deep thought, striving with humour; the lines of suffering wreathed into cordial mirth; and a smile of painful sweetness, present an image to the mind it can as little describe as lose. His personal appearance and manner are not unfitly characterised by what he himself says in one of his letters to Manning of Braham—'a compound of the Jew, the gentleman, and the angel.'" Add to this the sketch that Patmore has left of him: "In point of intellectual character and expression, a finer face was never seen, nor one more fully, however vaguely, corresponding with the mind whose features it interpreted. There was the gravity usually engendered by a life passed in book-learning, without the slightest tinge of that assumption and affectation which almost always attend the gravity so engendered; the intensity and elevation of general expression that mark high genius, without any of its pretension and its oddity; the sadness waiting on fruitless thoughts and baffled aspirations, but no evidence of that spirit of scorning and contempt which these are apt to engender. Above all, there was a pervading sweetness and gentleness which went straight to the heart of every one who looked on it; and not the less so, perhaps, that it bore about it an air, a something, seeming to tell that it was not *put on*—for nothing could be more unjust than to tax Lamb with assuming anything, even a virtue, which he did not possess—but preserved and persevered in, spite of opposing and contradictory feelings within that struggled in vain for mastery. It was a thing to remind you of that painful smile which bodily disease and agony will sometimes put on, to conceal

their sufferings from the observation of those they love."

It was a look—this look of patient endurance, of smiling resignation, of painful cheerfulness—that you could not understand unless you were aware of the appalling tragedy that lay in the background of his life, and of the haunting dread, the anxious, daily anticipation of disaster, and the need of concealing this anxiety from her, that were involved in the matter-of-course self-sacrifice with which he devoted himself to the care and guardianship of his sister, Mary.

It was in 1796, when Lamb was living with his father and mother and sister in lodgings in Little Queen Street, that the tragedy happened which was to overshadow all his after years. The father was drifting into second childhood, the mother an invalid. Mary Lamb had to attend upon them both, with the help of a small servant and, in addition, took in plain sewing; Charles was a junior clerk at the India House. Only a little while before Lamb had himself suffered a mental breakdown and had been placed under temporary restraint ("the six weeks that finished last year," he writes to Coleridge, in May 1796, "your very humble servant spent very agreeably in a madhouse, at Hoxton. I am got somewhat rational now, and don't bite any one. But mad I was"); then, in September 1796, his sister suddenly went out of her mind, stabbed her mother to the heart, and in her frenzy threw knives at others in the room, and wounded her father before Lamb could seize her and get her under control. There are no letters more terrible or more pathetic than those he wrote to

Coleridge, when the horror and heartbreak of this event was fresh upon him.

"My dearest Friend," he writes on the 27th September 1796, "White, or some of my friends, or the public papers, by this time have informed you of the terrible calamities that have fallen on our family. I will only give you the outlines. My poor dear, dearest sister, in a fit of insanity, has been the death of her own mother. I was at hand only time enough to snatch the knife out of her grasp. She is at present in a madhouse, from whence I fear she must be moved to an hospital. God has preserved to me my senses: I eat, and drink, and sleep, and have my judgment, I believe, very sound. My poor father was slightly wounded, and I am left to take care of him and my aunt. Mr. Norris, of the Bluecoat School, has been very kind to us, and we have no other friend; but thank God I am very calm and composed, and able to do the best that remains to do. Write as religious a letter as possible, but no mention of what is gone and done with. With me 'the former things are passed away,' and I have something more to do than to feel. God Almighty have us all in His keeping!

"C. LAMB.

"Mention nothing of poetry. I have destroyed every vestige of past vanities of that kind. Do as you please, but if you publish, publish mine (I give free leave) without name or initial, and never send me a book, I charge you.

"Your own judgment will convince you not to take any notice of this yet to your dear wife. You look after your family; I have my reason and strength

left to take care of mine. I charge you, don't think of coming to see me. Write. I will not see you if you come. God Almighty love you and all of us!

"C. LAMB."

The book he mentions is one that he and Coleridge and Lloyd were arranging to publish together. In October there is another letter, replying to one from Coleridge, and saying his sister is restored to her senses—a long letter from which I shall quote only one or two memorable passages: "God be praised, Coleridge! wonderful as it is to tell, I have never once been otherwise than collected and calm; even on that dreadful day, and in the midst of the terrible scene, I preserved a tranquillity which bystanders may have construed into indifference—a tranquillity not of despair. Is it folly or sin in me to say that it was a religious principle that *most* supported me? I allow much to other favourable circumstances. I felt that I had something else to do than to regret. On that first evening my aunt was lying insensible—to all appearance like one dying; my father, with his poor forehead plaistered over from a wound he had received from a daughter, dearly loved by him, and who loved him no less dearly; my mother a dead and murdered corpse in the next room; yet was I wonderfully supported. I closed not my eyes in sleep that night, but lay without terrors and without despair. I have lost no sleep since. . . . One little incident may serve to make you understand my way of managing my mind. Within a day or two after the fatal one, we dressed for dinner a tongue, which we had had salted for some weeks in the house. As I sat down, a feeling like

remorse struck me: this tongue poor Mary got for me; and can I partake of it now, when she is far away? A thought occurred and relieved me: if I give in to this way of feeling, there is not a chair, a room, an object in our rooms, that will not awaken the keenest griefs. I must rise above such weaknesses. I hope this was not want of true feeling. I did not let this carry me, though, too far. On the very second day (I date from the day of horrors), as is usual in such cases, there were a matter of twenty people, I do think, supping in our room: they prevailed on me to eat *with them* (for to eat I never refused). They were all making merry in the room! Some had come from friendship, some from busy curiosity, and some from interest. I was going to partake with them, when my recollection came that my poor dead mother was lying in the next room—the very next room—a mother who, through life, wished nothing but her children's welfare. Indignation, the rage of grief, something like remorse, rushed upon my mind. In an agony of emotion I found my way mechanically to the adjoining room, and fell on my knees by the side of her coffin, asking forgiveness of Heaven, and sometimes of her, for forgetting her so soon. Tranquillity returned, and it was the only violent emotion that mastered me. I think it did me good."

Through all his subsequent letters from time to time there are touching little references to his sister's illnesses: she is away, again and again, in the asylum, or in charge of nurses, and he is alone and miserable, but looking forward to her recovering presently and returning home. Once when they are away from London on a visit, she is suddenly taken with one of

these frenzies, and on the way back to town he has to borrow a waistcoat to restrain her violence in the coach. But his love and loyalty were proof against it all; nothing would induce him to separate from her or let her go out of his charge, except during those intervals when she was so deranged as to be a danger to others and to herself.

About the end of 1799 Lamb moved into the Temple and, first at Mitre Court Buildings, then in Middle Temple Lane, he resided there, near the house of his birth, for some seventeen years in all. In these two places he and his sister kept open house every Wednesday evening, and Hazlitt and Talfourd, Barry Cornwall, Holcroft, Godwin, and, when they were in town, Wordsworth and Coleridge were among their guests. Hazlitt and Talfourd and others have told us something of those joyous evenings in the small, dingy rooms, comfortable with books and old prints, where cold beef and porter stood ready on the sideboard for the visitors to help themselves, and whilst whoever chose sat and played at whist the rest fleeted the golden hours in jest and conversation.

Towards the end of 1817 the Lambs took lodgings at 20 Russell Street, Covent Garden, a house which was formerly part of Will's famous Coffee House, which Dryden used to frequent, having his winter seat by the fireside and his summer seat in the balcony, as chief of the wits and men of letters who made it their place of resort. In a letter to Dorothy Wordsworth, Mary Lamb reports their change of address: "We have left the Temple. I think you will be sorry to hear this. I know I have never been so well satisfied with thinking of you at Rydal Mount as when I could

connect the idea of you with your own Grasmere Cottage. Our rooms were dirty and out of repair, and the inconvenience of living in chambers became every year more irksome, and so, at last, we mustered up resolution enough to leave the good old place that so long had sheltered us, and here we are living at a brazier's shop, No. 20 Russell Street, Covent Garden, a place all alive with noise and bustle; Drury Lane Theatre in sight from our front, and Covent Garden from our back windows. The hubbub of the carriages returning from the play does not annoy me in the least; strange that it does not, for it is quite tremendous. I quite enjoy looking out of the window, and listening to the calling up of the carriages, and the squabbles of the coachmen and linkboys. It is the oddest

scene to look down upon; I am sure you would be amused with it. It is well I am in a cheerful place, or I should have many misgivings about leaving the Temple." And on the 21st November 1817, Lamb also writes to Dorothy Wordsworth: "Here we are, transplanted from our native soil. I thought we never could be torn up from the Temple. Indeed it was an ugly wrench, but like a tooth, now 'tis out, and I am easy. We never can strike root so deep in any other ground. This, where we are, is a light bit of gardener's mould, and if they take us up from it, it will cost no blood and groans, like mandrakes pulled up. We are in the individual spot I like best in all this great city. The theatres, with all their noises. Covent Garden, dearer to me than any gardens of Alcinous, where we are morally sure of the earliest peas and 'sparagus. Bow Street, where the thieves are examined, within a few yards of us. Mary had not been here four-and-twenty hours before she saw a thief. She sits at the window working; and casually throwing out her eyes, she sees a concourse of people coming this way, with a constable to conduct the solemnity. These little incidents agreeably diversify a female life."

During his residence in Russell Street, from 1817 till 1823, Lamb published in two volumes a collection of his miscellaneous writings, and contributed the *Essays of Elia* to the *London Magazine*, which makes this Russell Street house, in a sense, the most notable of his various London homes. Here he continued his social gatherings, but had no regular evening for them, sending forth announcements periodically, such as that he sent to Ayrton in 1823: "Cards

and cold mutton in Russell Street on Friday at 8 & 9. Gin and jokes from ½ past that time to 12. Pass this on to Mr. Payne, and apprize Martin thereof"—Martin being Martin Burney.

By the autumn of this year he has flitted from Covent Garden, and on the 2nd September writes to Bernard Barton: "When you come Londonward you will find me no longer in Covent Garden. I have a cottage in Colebrooke Row, Islington. A cottage, for it is detached; a white house, with six good rooms, the New River (rather elderly by this time) runs (if a moderate walking pace can be so termed) close to the foot of the house; and behind is a spacious garden, with vines (I assure you), pears, strawberries, parsnips, leeks, carrots, cabbages, to delight the heart of old Alcinous. You enter without passage into a cheerful dining-room, all studded over and rough with old books, and above is a lightsome drawing-room,

three windows, full of choice prints. I feel like a great lord, never having had a house before"; and writing at the end of that week to invite Allsop to dinner on Sunday he supplies him with these directions: "Colebrook Cottage, left hand side, end of Colebrook Row, on the western brink of the New River, a detached whitish house." To Barton, when he has been nearly three weeks at Islington, he says, "I continue to estimate my own roof-comforts highly. How could I remain all my life a lodger! My garden thrives (I am told), though I have yet reaped nothing but some tiny salad and withered carrots. But a garden's a garden anywhere, and twice a garden in London."

Here, in November of that year, happened the accident to George Dyer that supplied Lamb with the subject of his whimsical Elian essay, *Amicus Redivivus*. Dyer was an odd, eccentric, very absent-minded old bookworm who lived in Clifford's Inn; Lamb delighted in his absurdities, and loved him, and loved to make merry over his quaint sayings and doings. "You have seen our house," he writes to Mrs. Hazlitt, in the week after Dyer's adventure. "What I now tell you is literally true. Yesterday week George Dyer called upon us at one o'clock (*bright noonday*) on his way to dine with Mrs. Barbauld at Newington. He sat with Mary about half-an-hour, and took leave. The maid saw him go out, from her kitchen window, but suddenly losing sight of him, ran up in a fright to Mary. G. D., instead of keeping the slip that leads to the gate, had deliberately, staff in hand, in broad open day, marched into the New River. He had not his spectacles on, and

George Eliot
Wimbledon Park
F.A

you know his absence. Who helped him out they can hardly tell, but between 'em they got him out, drenched through and through. A mob collected by that time, and accompanied him in. 'Send for the Doctor,' they said: and a one-eyed fellow, dirty and drunk, was fetched from the public-house at the end, where it seems he lurks for the sake of picking up water practice; having formerly had a medal from the Humane Society for some rescue. By his advice the patient was put between blankets; and when I came home at four to dinner, I found G. D. abed and raving, light-headed with the brandy and water which the doctor had administered. He sang, laughed, whimpered, screamed, babbled of guardian angels, would get up and go home; but we kept him there by force; and by next morning he departed sober, and seems to have received no injury."

Before he left Islington the India Company bestowed upon Lamb the pension that at last emancipated him from his "dry drudgery at the desk's dead wood," and he communicates the great news exultantly to Wordsworth in a letter dated "Colebrook Cottage," 6th April 1825: "Here I am, then, after thirty-three years' slavery, sitting in my own room at eleven o'clock this finest of all April mornings, a freed man, with £441 a year for the remainder of my life, live I as long as John Dennis, who outlived his annuity and starved at ninety: £441, *i.e.* £450, with a deduction of £9 for a provision secured to my sister, she being survivor, the pension guaranteed by Act Georgii Tertii, &c. I came home FOR EVER on Tuesday in last week. The incomprehensibleness of my condition overwhelmed me. It was like passing from life into

eternity. Every year to be as long as three, *i.e.* to have three times as much real time (time that is my own) in it! I wandered about thinking I was happy, but feeling I was not. But the tumultuousness is passing off, and I begin to understand the nature of the gift. Holydays, even the annual month, were always uneasy joys; their conscious fugitiveness; the craving after making the most of them. Now, when all is holyday, there are no holydays. I can sit at home in rain or shine without a restless impulse for walkings. I am daily steadying, and shall soon find it as natural to me to be my own master as it has been irksome to have had a master. Mary wakes every morning with an obscure feeling that some good has happened to us."

He made use of these experiences in one of the best of his essays, that on *The Superannuated Man*, in which also you find echoes of a letter he wrote to Bernard Barton just after he had written to Wordsworth:

"I am free, B. B.—free as air.

'The little bird that wings the sky
Knows no such liberty!'

"I was set free on Tuesday in last week at four o'clock.

'I came home for ever!'

"I have been describing my feelings as well as I can to Wordsworth in a long letter and don't care to repeat. Take it briefly that for a few days I was painfully oppressed by so mighty a change, but it is becoming daily more natural to me. I went and sat among 'em all at my old thirty-three years' desk yester morning; and deuce take me if I had not

yearnings at leaving all my old pen-and-ink fellows, merry, sociable lads, at leaving them in the lurch, fag, fag, fag! The comparison of my own superior felicity gave me anything but pleasure. B. B. I would not serve another seven years for seven hundred thousand pounds."

From Islington Lamb journeyed over to Highgate every now and then to visit Coleridge at Mr. Gilman's; and a-visiting him at Colebrooke Cottage came Coleridge, Southey, William Hone, and among many another, Hood, to whom he took an especial liking. Coleridge thought he was the author of certain Odes that were then appearing in the *London Magazine*, but writing in reply Lamb assured him he was mistaken: "The Odes are four-fifths done by Hood, a silentish young man you met at Islington one day, an invalid. The rest are Reynolds's, whose sister H. has recently married."

During the two years or more after his release from the India House, Lamb and his sister spent two or three short holidays lodging with a Mrs. Leishman at The Chase, Enfield; in 1827 they rented the house of her, and Lamb wrote from that address on the 18th September to Hood, who was then living at 2 Robert Street, Adelphi: "Give our kind loves to all at Highgate, and tell them we have finally torn ourselves outright away from Colebrooke, where I had *no* health, and are about to domicilate for good at Enfield, where I have experienced good.

> 'Lord, what good hours do we keep!
> How quietly we sleep!' . . .

We have got our books into our new house. I am

a dray-horse if I was not ashamed of the undigested dirty lumber, as I toppled 'em out of the cart, and blest Becky that came with 'em for her having an unstuffed brain with such rubbish. . . . 'Twas with some pain we were evulsed from Colebrook. You may find some of our flesh sticking to the doorposts. To change habitations is to die to them; and in my time I have died seven deaths. But I don't know whether every such change does not bring with it a rejuvenescence. 'Tis an enterprise; and shoves back the sense of death's approximating which, though not terrible to me, is at all times particularly distasteful. My house-deaths have generally been periodical, recurring after seven years; but this last is premature by half that time. Cut off in the flower of Colebrook!" He mentions that the rent is 10s. less than he paid at Islington; that he pays, in fact, £35 a year, exclusive of moderate taxes, and thinks himself lucky.

But the worry of moving brought on one of Mary Lamb's "sad, long illnesses"; and whilst she was absent, Lamb fled from the loneliness of his country home to spend ten days in town. "But Town," he writes to Barton, "with all my native hankering after it, is not what it was. The streets, the shops are left, but all old friends are gone. And in London I was frightfully convinced of this as I past houses and places—empty caskets now. I have ceased to care almost about anybody. The bodies I cared for are in graves or dispersed. My old Clubs, that lived so long and flourished so steadily, are crumbled away. When I took leave of our adopted young friend at Charing Cross, 'twas heavy unfeeling rain and I had

nowhere to go. Home have I none—and not a sympathising house to turn to in the great city. Never did the waters of the heaven pour down on a forlorner head. Yet I tried ten days at a sort of friend's house, but it was large and straggling—one of the individuals of my long knot of friends, card-players, pleasant companions—that have tumbled to pieces into dust and other things—and I got home on Thursday convinced that I was better to get home to my hole at Enfield, and hide like a sick cat in my corner. Less than a month, I hope, will bring home Mary. She is at Fulham, looking better in her health than ever, but sadly rambling, and scarce showing any pleasure in seeing me, or curiosity when I should come again. But the old feelings will come back again, and we shall drown old sorrows over a game of Picquet again. But 'tis a tedious cut out of a life of sixty-four, to lose twelve or thirteen weeks every year or two."

The cares of housekeeping, however, sat too heavily on them, and in October 1829 they abandoned those responsibilities, gave up their cottage on Chase Side, and went to lodge and board with their next-door neighbours, an old Mr. and Mrs. Westwood, and in this easier way of living their spirits and their health revived. Nevertheless, by January 1830 Lamb had lost all his contentment with rural life, and was yearning desperately for the remembered joys of London. "And is it a year since we parted from you at the steps of Edmonton stage?" he writes to Wordsworth. "There are not now the years that there used to be." He frets, he says, like a lion in a net, and then goes on to utter that yearning to be back in London that I have quoted already in my opening

chapter. "Back-looking ambition," he continues, "tells me I might still be a Londoner! Well, if we ever do move, we have incumbrances the less to impede us; all our furniture has faded under the auctioneer's hammer, going for nothing, like the tarnished frippery of the prodigal, and we have only a spoon or two left to bless us. Clothed we came into Enfield, and naked we must go out of it. I would live in London shirtless, bookless." And to Bernard Barton he says, "With fire and candle-light I can dream myself in Holborn. . . . Give me old London at Fire and Plague times, rather than these tepid gales, healthy country air, and purposeless exercise."

Early in 1833 he removed from Enfield, and his reasons for doing so he explains in a letter to Mrs. Hazlitt, on the 31st May of that year: "I am driven from house to house by Mary's illness. I took a sudden resolution to take my sister to Edmonton, where she was under medical treatment last time, and have arranged to board and lodge with the people. Thank God I have repudiated Enfield. I have got out of hell, despair of heaven, and must sit down contented in a half-way purgatory. Thus ends this strange eventful history. But I am nearer to town, and will get up to you somehow before long." About the same date he wrote to Wordsworth: "Mary is ill again. Her illnesses encroach yearly. The last was three months, followed by two of depression most dreadful. I look back upon her earlier attacks with longing—nice little durations of six weeks or so, followed by complete restoration—shocking as they were to me then. In short, half her life she is dead to me, and the other half is made anxious with fears

and lookings forward to the next shock. With such prospects it seemed to me necessary that she should no longer live with me, and be fluttered with continual removals; so I am come to live with her, at a Mr. Walden's, and his wife, who take in patients, and have arranged to lodge and board us only. They have had the care of her before. I see little of her: alas! I too often hear her. *Sunt lachrymæ rerum!* and you and I must bear it. . . . I am about to lose my old and only walk-companion, whose mirthful spirits were the 'youth of our house,' Emma Isola. I have her here now for a little while, but she is too nervous properly to be under such a roof, so she will make short visits—be no more an inmate. With my perfect approval and more than concurrence she is to be wedded to Moxon at the end of August—so 'perish the roses and the flowers'—how is it? Now to the brighter side. I am emancipated from the Westwoods, and I am with attentive people and younger. I am three or four miles nearer the great city; coaches half-price less and going always, of which I will avail myself. I have few friends left there; one or two though, most beloved. But London streets and faces cheer me inexpressibly, though not one known of the latter were remaining."

Emma Isola is "the adopted young friend" referred to by Lamb in a letter quoted a few pages back. She was the granddaughter of an Italian refugee; her mother was dead; her father was an "Esquire Bedell" of Cambridge, and the Lambs met her at the house of a friend when they were visiting that town in 1823. She was a charming, brown-faced little girl, and they were so taken with her that she was invited to visit

them in London during her holidays, and they ended by adopting her and calling her their niece. She brought a great deal of happiness into their lives; Lamb gives whimsical accounts in some of his letters of how he is teaching her Latin, and his sister is prompting her in her French lessons. When she was old enough she became governess in the family of a Mr. and Mrs. Williams at Bury; fell ill and was kindly nursed there; and Lamb tells in one of his most delightful letters how he went to fetch her home to Enfield, when she was convalescent, and it is good to glimpse how sympathetically amused he is at Emma's covert admonitions and anxiety lest he should drink too much, at dinner with the Williamses, and so bring disgrace upon himself and her.

His beautiful affection for their young ward shines through all the drollery of his several notes to Edward Moxon (the publisher) in which he speaks of their engagement; and it has always seemed to me it is this same underlying affection for her and wistfulness to see her happy that help to make the following letter, written just after the wedding, one of the finest and most pathetic things in literature :—

"*August* 1833.

"Dear Mr. and Mrs. Moxon,—Time very short. I wrote to Miss Fryer, and had the sweetest letter about you, Emma, that ever friendship dictated. 'I am full of good wishes, I am crying with good wishes,' she says; but you shall see it.

"Dear Moxon, I take your writing most kindly, and shall most kindly your writing from Paris. I want to crowd another letter to Miss Fryer into the little

George Eliot's House
Chelsea
Fred.k Adcock

LAMB'S COTTAGE
EDMONTON
fred^k Adcock

time after dinner, before post time. So with twenty thousand congratulations,—Yours, C. L.

"I am calm, sober, happy. Turn over for the reason. I got home from Dover Street, by Evans, *half as sober as a judge.* I am turning over a new leaf, as I hope you will now."

[*The turn of the leaf presents the following :*—]

"My dear Emma and Edward Moxon,—Accept my sincere congratulations, and imagine more good wishes than my weak nerves will let me put into good set words. The dreary blank of *unanswered questions* which I ventured to ask in vain was cleared up on the wedding day by Mrs. W. taking a glass of wine and, with a total change of countenance, begging leave to drink Mr. and Mrs. Moxon's health. It restored me from that moment, as if by an electrical stroke, to the entire possession of my senses. I never felt so calm and quiet after a similar illness as I do now. I feel as if all tears were wiped from my eyes, and all care from my heart. Mary Lamb."

"*Wednesday.*

"Dears again,—Your letter interrupted a seventh game at picquet which *we* were having, after walking to Wright's and purchasing shoes. We pass our time in cards, walks, and reading. We attack Tasso soon.

"C. L.

"Never was such a calm, or such a recovery. 'Tis her own words undictated."

And it was in this plain, commonplace little cottage in Church Street, Edmonton, that Mary Lamb was

thus suddenly awakened out of her derangement; that Charles Lamb and she wrote, by turns, that letter to the Moxons; that the Lambs sat contentedly playing picquet when the letter of the bride and bridegroom came to them from Paris. These are the very rooms in which these things happened; the stage remains, but the actors are departed. Within a stone's throw of the house, in Edmonton Churchyard, Lamb and his sister lie buried. His death was the result of an accident. He had gone on his accustomed walk along the London Road, one day in December, when he stumbled and fell over a stone, slightly injuring his face. So trivial did the wound seem that writing to George Dyer's wife on the 22nd December 1834, about a book he had lost when he was in London—"it was the book I went to fetch from Miss Buffham's while the tripe was frying"—he says nothing of anything being the matter with him. But erysipelas supervened, and he grew rapidly worse, and died on the 27th. His sister, who had lapsed into one of her illnesses and was unconscious, at the time, of her loss, outlived him by nearly thirteen years, and reached the great age of eighty-two.

CHAPTER XII

ST. JOHN'S WOOD AND WIMBLEDON

Mary Lamb passed the later years of her life in a sort of nursing home at St. John's Wood, and in her happier intervals kept up a pleasant acquaintance with some of the notable circle of friends who had gathered about her and her brother aforetime; among others, with the Hoods, who were then living in the same locality. Crabb Robinson mentions in his Diary how he made a call on Mary Lamb, and finding her well over one of her periodical attacks, "quite in possession of her faculties and recollecting nearly everything," he accompanied her on a visit to the Hoods, who were lodging at 17 Elm Tree Road.

Perhaps one of the most graphic pictures we have of Hood's home life, and incidentally of Hood himself and his wife and of Charles and Mary Lamb, is contained in the account that has been left by Miss Mary Balmanno of an evening she spent with the Hoods when they were making their home in Robert Street, Adelphi: "Bound in the closest ties of friendship with the Hoods, with whom we also were in the habit of continually associating, we had the pleasure of meeting Charles Lamb at their house one evening, together with his sister, and several other friends. . . . In outward appearance Hood conveyed the idea of a clergyman. His figure slight, and invariably dressed

in black; his face pallid; the complexion delicate, and features regular: his countenance bespeaking sympathy by its sweet expression of melancholy and suffering.

"Lamb was of a different mould and aspect. Of middle height, with brown and rather ruddy complexion, grey eyes expressive of sense and shrewdness, but neither large nor brilliant; his head and features well shaped, and the general expression of his countenance quiet, kind, and observant, undergoing rapid changes in conversation, as did his manner, variable as an April day, particularly to his sister, whose saint-like good humour and patience were as remarkable as his strange and whimsical modes of trying them. But the brother and sister perfectly understood each other, and 'Charles,' as she always called him, would not have been the Charles of her loving heart without the pranks and oddities which he was continually playing off upon her, and which were only outnumbered by the instances of affection and evidences of ever-watchful solicitude with which he surrounded her.

"Miss Lamb, although many years older than her brother, by no means looked so, but presented the pleasant appearance of a mild, rather stout and comely lady of middle age. Dressed with Quaker-like simplicity in dove-coloured silk, with a transparent kerchief of snow-white muslin folded across her bosom, she at once prepossessed the beholder in her favour by an aspect of serenity and peace. Her manners were very quiet and gentle, and her voice low. She smiled frequently, and seldom laughed, partaking of the courtesies and hospitalities of her merry host and hostess with all the cheerfulness and

grace of a most mild and kindly nature. Her behaviour to her brother was like that of an admiring disciple; her eyes seldom absent from his face. And when apparently engrossed in conversation with others, she would, by supplying some word for which he was at a loss, even when talking in a distant part of the room, show how closely her mind waited upon his. Mr. Lamb was in high spirits, sauntering about the room with his hands crossed behind his back, conversing by fits and starts with those most familiarly known to him. . . ."

She goes on to describe how Miss Kelly, the actress, amused them by impersonating a character she was taking in a new play, and "Mrs. Hood's eyes sparkled with joy, as she saw the effect it had produced upon her husband, whose pale face, like an illuminated comic mask, shone with fun and good humour. Never was a happier couple than the Hoods; 'mutual reliance and fond faith' seemed to be their motto. Mrs. Hood was a most amiable woman—of excellent manners, and full of sincerity and goodness. She perfectly adored her husband, tending him like a child, whilst he, with unbounded affection, seemed to delight to yield himself to her guidance. Nevertheless, true to his humorous nature, he loved to tease her with jokes and whimsical accusations, which were only responded to by, 'Hood, Hood, how can you run on so?'

"The evening was concluded by a supper, one of those elegant social repasts which Flemish artists delight to paint. . . . Mr. Lamb oddly walked round the table, looking closely at any dish that struck his fancy before he would decide where to sit, telling Mrs.

Hood that he should by that means know how to select some dish that was difficult to carve and take the trouble off her hands; accordingly, having jested in this manner, he placed himself with great deliberation before a lobster salad, observing *that* was the thing.

"Mr. Hood, with inexpressible gravity in the upper part of his face and his mouth twitching with smiles, sang his own comic song of 'If you go to France be sure you learn the lingo'; his pensive manner and feeble voice making it doubly ludicrous. Mr. Lamb, on being pressed to sing, excused himself in his own peculiar manner, but offered to pronounce a Latin eulogium instead. This was accepted, and he accordingly stammered forth a long stream of Latin words; among which, as the name of Mrs. Hood frequently occurred, we ladies thought it in praise of her. The delivery of this speech occupied about five minutes. On inquiring of a gentleman who sat next me whether Mr. Lamb was praising Mrs. Hood, he informed me that was by no means the case, the eulogium being on the lobster salad! Thus, in the gayest of moods, progressed and concluded a truly merry little social supper, worthy in all respects of the author of *Whims and Oddities*."

But all this, when the Hoods came to St. John's Wood, lay thirteen years behind them, and Lamb had been eight years dead. Quitting the Adelphi in 1829, Hood went to Winchmore Hill, then to Wanstead; then, after some five years of residence in Germany and Belgium, he returned to England, and made his home for a short time at Camberwell, and thence in 1842 removed to St. John's Wood—at first to rooms at 17 (now 20) Elm Tree Road, and in 1844 to a

house of his own, "Devonshire Lodge," in the Finchley Road—a house that the guide-books all tell us was demolished, but since I started to

write this chapter the London County Council has identified as "Devonshire Lodge" the house that still stands in Finchley Road, immediately adjoining the Marlborough Road station of the Metropolitan

Railway; and here it was that Hood died on the 3rd of May 1845.

The room in which he worked at 17 Elm Tree Road gave him a view of Lord's Cricket Ground, and he complained that this was a drawback, because "when he was at work he could often see others at play." He caricatured the landlady of the house, who had "a large and personal love of flowers," and made her the heroine of his *Mrs. Gardiner, A Horticultural Romance.* From Elm Tree Road he went to attend the dinner at Greenwich that was given to Dickens on his second return from America; and describing this dissipation in a letter to a friend he says, "You will be pleased to hear that, in spite of my warnings and forebodings, I got better and betterer, till by dining, as the physicians did, on turtle soup, white-bait, and champagne, I seemed quite well." He was to have been chairman at the dinner, but excused himself on the score of ill-health, and Captain Marryat took his place. The diners included, in addition to Dickens himself, Moncton Milnes, Forster, Clarkson Stanfield, Ainsworth, Landseer (another St. John's Wood resident), Cruikshank, Cattermole, "Ingoldsby" Barham, and Barry Cornwall. Being called upon for a speech, Hood said he supposed they drank his health because he was a notorious invalid, but assured the company that the trembling of his hand was neither from palsy nor ague, but that their wishes had already so improved his circulation and filled him with genial warmth that his hand had a natural inclination to shake itself with every one present. Whereupon everybody within reach, and some who were not, insisted upon shaking hands with him.

"*Very* gratifying, wasn't it?" he finishes his letter. "Though I cannot go quite so far as Jane, who wants me to have that hand chopped off, bottled, and preserved in spirits. She was sitting up for me, very anxiously, as usual when I go out, because I am so domestic and steady, and was down at the door before I could ring at the gate, to which Boz kindly sent me in his own carriage. Poor girl! what *would* she do if she had a wild husband instead of a tame one."

Dickens, at that date, lived at 1 Devonshire Terrace, Marylebone Road; they had probably driven up together from Greenwich, and the carriage had come the mile or so further on with Hood after leaving Dickens at his own door. Dickens was one of the many visitors who have helped to make Hood's St. John's Wood residence memorable; there is a record of his being there, with his wife and sister and Daniel Maclise, in December 1842. At Elm Tree Road, for all his broken health, Hood worked hard at editing and writing for the *New Monthly Magazine*, and, after resigning from that, for *Hood's Monthly Magazine*. One letter of his, dated from 17 Elm Tree Road, on the 18th July 1843, is headed "From my bed"; for he was frequently bedridden for days and weeks at a stretch, but sat propped up with pillows, writing and sketching with unabated industry. He was contributing also in these days to *Punch*, and to Douglas Jerrold's *Illuminated Magazine*. In November 1843 he wrote here, for *Punch*, his grim *Drop of Gin:*

"Gin! Gin! a drop of Gin!
What magnified monsters circle therein!
Ragged, and stained with filth and mud,
Some plague-spotted, and some with blood!

Shapes of misery, shame, and sin!
Figures that make us loathe and tremble,
Creatures scarce human, that more resemble
Broods of diabolical kin,
Ghost and vampyre, demon and Jin! . . ."

But a far greater poem than this, *The Song of the Shirt*, was also written at Elm Tree Road. "Now mind, Hood, mark my words," said Mrs. Hood, when he was putting up the manuscript for the post, "this will tell wonderfully. It is one of the best things you ever did." And the results justified her. The verses appeared in the Christmas Number of *Punch* for 1843, and not only trebled the circulation of that paper, but within a very short time had at least doubled Hood's reputation, though *Eugene Aram*, *The Plea of the Midsummer Fairies*, and *Lycus the Centaur*, had long preceded it. Probably no poem ever stirred the national conscience more deeply or created a profounder sensation. Shortly after its appearance Cowden Clarke met Hood, and has left a vivid description of his personal appearance in those last months of his life. His worn, pallid look, he says, "strangely belied the effect of jocularity and high spirits conveyed by his writings. He punned incessantly, but languidly, almost as if unable to think in any other way than in play upon words. His smile was attractively sweet; it bespoke the affectionate-natured man which his serious verses—those especially addressed to his wife or his children—show him to be, and it also revealed the depth of pathos in his soul that inspired his *Bridge of Sighs*, *Song of the Shirt*, and *Eugene Aram*.

There are many interesting points of resemblance between Hood and Lamb. Both were inveterate

punsters; each had known poverty, and had come through hard experiences that had left their marks upon them, yet had never soured them or warped their sympathies. You may use the same epithets for both: they were homely, kindly, gentle, given to freakish moods and whimsical jesting; the one was as unselfishly devoted to his sister as the other was to his wife and children; and in descriptions of Hood, as of Lamb, stress is laid on the peculiar wistfulness and sweetness of his smile. But after the East India Company had handsomely pensioned him off, Lamb had no further financial anxieties; whilst Hood had to suppress his finer gifts, and to the end of his days turn his hand to all manner of inferior but more popular work, that would enable him to keep the family pot boiling. And he was all the while fighting against disease as well as poverty. He could not afford to go into exile, like Stevenson, and lengthen his days and foster his wasting strength in a healthfuller climate. He was never rich enough to have any choice but to die in the place where he had to earn his living, and no man ever worked more manfully, or died at his post bravelier or with a more cheery philosophy.

Read the humorous preface he wrote for the volume of *Hood's Own*, whilst he lay ill abed there in his St. John's Wood house: it is the sort of humour that makes your heart ache, for you cannot forget that he was racked with pain and slowly dying whilst he wrote it. He jests about the aristocratic, ghastly slenderness of his fingers; his body, he says, may cry craven, but luckily his mind has no mind to give in. "'Things may take a turn,' as the pig said on the spit. . . . As to health, it's the weather of the body—it rains, it

hails, it blows, it snows at present, but it may clear up by-and-by"; and in conclusion he mentions that the doctor tells him, "anatomically my heart is lower hung than usual, but what of that? *The more need to keep it up!*" Raised up in bed, with an improvised desk across his knees, he was hard at work, writing prose and verse and knocking off grotesque little drawings, and remained, as he said, "a lively Hood to get a livelihood," almost to his last hour. When, towards the end, his wife was trying to relieve his sufferings by putting a poultice on his emaciated body, he laughed up at her quizzically, and asked if she didn't think "it seemed a deal of mustard for such a little meat." He had moved into Devonshire Lodge, and was within sixteen months of his death when he wrote *The Haunted House*, and *The Bridge of Sighs*. "I fear that so far as I myself am concerned," he writes to Thackeray in August 1844, "King Death will claim me ere many months elapse. However, there's a good time coming, if not in this world, most assuredly in the next." When he was invited next month to attend a soirée at the Manchester Athenæum, he had to decline, and added, "For me all long journeys are over save one"; but a couple of months later he had written the *Lay of the Labourer*, for his magazine, and writing to Lord Lytton remarked that though the doctor had ordered him not to work he was compelled to do so, and "so it will be to the end. I must die in harness, like a hero—or a horse."

His dying hours were made easy by the pension of a hundred pounds that Sir Robert Peel kindly and tactfully settled on Mrs. Hood, and one of the last things he wrote on his lingering deathbed was a

valediction that breathed all of resignation and hope:

"Farewell, Life! My senses swim
And the world is growing dim;
Thronging shadows cloud the light,
Like the advent of the night,—
Colder, colder, colder still
Upwards steals a vapour chill—
Strong the earthy odour grows—
I smell the Mould above the Rose!

Welcome, Life! The Spirit strives!
Strength returns, and hope revives;
Cloudy fears and shapes forlorn
Fly like shadows at the morn,—
O'er the earth there comes a bloom—
Sunny light for sullen gloom,
Warm perfume for vapour cold—
I smell the Rose above the Mould!"

Herbert Spencer lived in St. John's Wood for many years, at 7 Marlborough Gardens, 13 Loudon Road, and 64 Avenue Road successively. Within an easy walk of Avenue Road, at 34 Arlington Road, Camden Town, Charles Dibdin, whose memory survives in *Tom Bowling*, passed the last years of his life. And, back in St. John's Wood, at the Priory, 21 North Bank, in one of the numerous houses that were swept away when the Great Central Railway came to Marylebone, George Eliot lived from 1864 until 1880, when she removed to Chelsea. Before that, from 1860 till 1863, she had lived in a house in Blandford Square, which has also been demolished; but for nearly two years before going there she resided at Holly Lodge, which still survives, in the Wimbledon Park Road.

There is an entry in her Diary dated 6th February 1859: "Yesterday we went to take possession of Holly Lodge, which is to be our dwelling, we expect, for years to come. It was a deliciously fresh, bright day. I will accept the omen. A letter came from Blackwood telling me the result of the subscription to *Adam Bede*, which was published on the 1st: 730 copies, Mudie having taken 500 on the publisher's terms—10 per cent. off the sale price. At first he had stood out for a larger reduction, and would only take 50, but at last he came round. In this letter Blackwood tells me the first *ab extra* opinion of the book, which happened to be precisely what I most desired. A cabinetmaker (brother to Blackwood's managing clerk) had read the sheets, and declared the writer must have been brought up to the business, or at least had listened to the workmen in their workshop." She wrote that month to Miss Sara Hennell, "We are tolerably settled now, except that we have only a temporary servant; and I shall not be quite at ease until I have a trustworthy woman who will manage without incessant dogging. Our home is very comfortable, with far more vulgar indulgences in it than I ever expected to have again; but you must not imagine it a snug place, just peeping above the holly bushes. Imagine it rather as a tall cake, with a low garnish of holly and laurel. As it is, we are very well off, with glorious breezy walks, and wide horizons, well-ventilated rooms, and abundant water. If I allowed myself to have any longings beyond what is given, they would be for a nook quite in the country, far away from palaces—Crystal or otherwise—with an orchard behind me full of old trees, and rough grass

and hedgerow paths among the endless fields where you meet nobody. We talk of such things sometimes, along with old age and dim faculties, and a small independence to save us from writing drivel for dishonest money."

The "we" in these entries means, of course, herself and George Henry Lewes; they formed an irregular union in 1854, and lived as husband and wife until his death in 1878. In George Eliot's Journal and letters are a good many other references to her life at Holly Lodge, of which the most interesting are perhaps the following:

April 29th, 1859 (from the Journal): "Finished a story, *The Lifted Veil*, which I began one morning at Richmond as a resource when my head was too stupid for more important work. Resumed my new novel" (this was *The Mill on the Floss*), "of which I am going to rewrite the two first chapters. I shall call it provisionally *The Tullivers*, or perhaps *St. Ogg's on the Floss*."

May 6th (from a letter to Major Blackwood): "Yes I *am* assured now that *Adam Bede* was worth writing—worth living through long years to write. But now it seems impossible to me that I shall ever write anything so good and true again. I have arrived at faith in the past but not faith in the future."

May 19th (from Journal): "A letter from Blackwood, in which he proposes to give me another £400 at the end of the year, making in all £1200, as an acknowledgment of *Adam Bede's* success."

June 8th (from a letter to Mrs. Congreve): "I want to get rid of this house—cut cable and drift about. I dislike Wandsworth, and should think with

unmitigated regret of our coming here if it were not for you."

July 21st (from the Journal, on returning after a holiday in Switzerland): "Found a charming letter from Dickens, and pleasant letters from Blackwood—nothing to annoy us."

November 10th (from the Journal): "Dickens dined with us to-day for the first time."

December 15th (from the Journal): "Blackwood proposes to give me for *The Mill on the Floss*, £2000 for 4000 copies of an edition at 31s. 6d., and afterwards the same rate for any more copies printed at the same price; £150 for 1000 at 12s.; and £60 for 1000 at 6s. I have accepted."

January 3rd, 1860 (from a letter to John Blackwood): "We are demurring about the title. Mr. Lewes is beginning to prefer *The House of Tulliver, or Life on the Floss*, to our old notion of *Sister Maggie*. *The Tullivers, or Life on the Floss* has the advantage of slipping easily off the lazy English tongue, but it is after too common a fashion (*The Newcomes*, *The Bertrams*, &c., &c.). Then there is *The Tulliver Family, or Life on the Floss*. Pray meditate and give us your opinion."

January 16th, 1860 (from the Journal): "Finished my second volume this morning, and am going to send off the MS. of the first volume to-morrow. We have decided that the title shall be *The Mill on the Floss*."

February 23rd (from a letter to John Blackwood): "Sir Edward Lytton called on us yesterday. The conversation lapsed chiefly into monologue, from the difficulty I found in making him hear, but under all disadvantages I had an agreeable impression of his

kindness and sincerity. He thinks the two defects of *Adam Bede* are the dialect and Adam's marriage with Dinah, but of course I would have my teeth drawn rather than give up either."

July 1st (from a letter to Madame Bodichon, on returning to Holly Lodge after a two months' holiday in Italy): "We are preparing to renounce the delights of roving, and to settle down quietly, as old folks should do. . . . We have let our present house."

One interesting memorial of the life at Holly Lodge is the MS. of *The Mill on the Floss*, on which is inscribed in George Eliot's handwriting: "To my beloved husband, George Henry Lewes, I give this MS. of my third book, written in the sixth year of our life together, at Holly Lodge, South Field, Wandsworth, and finished 21st March 1860."

The publication of *The Mill on the Floss*, and, in the three succeeding years, of *Silas Marner* and *Romola*, carried George Eliot to the height of her fame, and by the time she was living in North Bank, St. John's Wood, she had her little circle of adoring worshippers, who, like George Henry Lewes, took her very seriously indeed. That sort of hero-worship was customary in those days, unless the worshipped one had too strong a sense of humour to put up with it. There is a passage in the Autobiography of Mr. Alfred Austin giving a brief account of a visit he paid to George Eliot. "We took the first opportunity," he says, "of going to call on her at her request in St. John's Wood. But there I found pervading her house an attitude of adoration, not to say an atmosphere almost of awe, thoroughly alien to my idea that persons of genius, save in their works, should resemble other

people as much as possible, and not allow any special fuss to be made about them. I do not say the fault lay with her." But you find the same circumstance spoken to elsewhere, and the general notion you gather is that George Eliot rather enjoyed this being pedestalled, and accepted the incense of her reverent little circle with a good deal of complacency.

In 1878 Lewes died, and in March 1880 George Eliot was married to John Cross. They left St. John's Wood on the 3rd of the following December and went to 4 Cheyne Walk, Chelsea, where George Eliot died on the 22nd of the same month.

CHARLES DIBDIN
34 ARLINGTON ROAD
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CHAPTER XIII

CHELSEA MEMORIES

COMING to close quarters with it, I am not sure that, after all, Chelsea has not more to offer the literary pilgrim than even Hampstead has. Addison, Locke, Smollett, Horace Walpole, are among the illustrious names whose local habitations were once there but are no longer to be seen. Charles and Henry Kingsley spent their boyhood at their father's rectory in Sidney Street; Daniel Maclise lived for ten years at 4 Cheyne Walk, where George Eliot died; and "Queen's House," No. 16 Cheyne Walk, is the house that, in 1862, Rossetti, Swinburne, William Michael Rossetti, and Meredith took as joint-tenants. Meredith soon paid a quarter's rent in lieu of notice and withdrew from the arrangement, but Swinburne and Rossetti lived on there together for some years, and did much of their greatest work there. Swinburne was next to go, and he presently set up house with Mr. Watts-Dunton at "The Pines," near the foot of Putney Hill, where he lived till his death in 1909. In the early seventies Mr. W. M. Rossetti married and removed elsewhere, and Dante Gabriel Rossetti stayed on in the Chelsea house alone.

Later, in the gloomy days before he went away to Birchington to die, Rossetti suffered terribly from insomnia, was ill and depressed, and a prey to morbid

QUEENS HOUSE
CHEYNE WALK
Fred^c Adcock

imaginings, but in the earlier years of his tenancy of 16 Cheyne Walk he was absorbed in his art, his house was lively with many visitors, and in his lazy, sociable fashion he seems to have been almost as happy as a man of his sensitive temperament could be. "Here," writes Mr. Joseph Knight, "were held those meetings, prolonged often until the early hours of the morning, which to those privileged to be present were veritable nights and feasts of gods. Here in the dimly-lighted studio, around the blazing fire, used to assemble the men of distinction or promise in literature and art whom the magnetism of Rossetti's individuality collected around him. Here Rossetti himself used, though rarely, to read aloud, with his voice of indescribable power and clearness, and with a bell-like utterance that still dwells in the mind, passages from the poems he admired; and here, more frequently, some young poet, encouraged by his sympathy, which to all earnest effort in art was overflowing and inexhaustible, would recite his latest sonnet." He crowded his rooms with quaintly-carved oak furniture, and beautiful ornaments; he had a wonderful collection of blue china that he sometimes put on the table and recklessly used at his dinner-parties. In his garden he had "a motley collection of animals, peacocks, armadilloes, the wombat, woodchuck, or Canadian marmot, and other outlandish creatures, including the famous zebu." This zebu was kept fastened to a tree, and Rossetti loved to exhibit it and point out its beauties with his maulstick. Mr. Knight goes on to repeat the story that was told concerning this animal by Whistler, who was at that time living at what is now 101 Cheyne Walk, and was then 7 Lindsey

Row. According to Whistler, one day when he and Rossetti were alone in the garden, "and Rossetti was contemplating once more the admired possession, and pointing out with the objectionable stick the points of special beauty, resentment blazed into indignation. By a super-bovine exertion the zebu tore up the roots of the tree to which it was attached, and chased its tormentor round the garden, which was extensive enough to admit of an exciting chase round the trees." The zebu was fortunately hampered by the uprooted tree, and Rossetti made good his escape, but he would harbour the animal no longer, and as nobody would buy it he gave it away.

You get an illuminating glimpse of Rossetti's home life in these days from that useful literary chronicle, Allingham's Diary (Monday, June 27, 1864): "Got down to Chelsea by half-past eight to D. G. R.'s. Breakfasted in a small, lofty room on first floor with window looking on the garden. Fanny in white. Then we went into the garden, and lay on the grass, eating strawberries and looking at the peacock. F. went to look at the 'chicking,' her plural of chicken. Then Swinburne came in and soon began to recite—a parody on Browning was one thing; and after him Whistler, who talked about his own pictures—Royal Academy—the Chinese painter girl, Millais, &c."

Rossetti's wife had died shortly before he went to Cheyne Walk, and it was during his residence here that her grave in Highgate Cemetery was opened, that the manuscript volume of poems he had buried with her might be recovered, and most of its contents included in his first published book of original work.

One time and another Whistler occupied four

different houses in Cheyne Walk, and No. 101 was the first of these. He had been living in lodgings, or with his brother-in-law, since he came over from America, but in 1863 he took the Cheyne Walk house, and his mother went to live there with him. It is a three-storey house, and the back room on the first floor was his studio; the river lies before it, just across the road, and he could see from his front windows old Battersea Bridge, Battersea Church on the other side of the Thames, and at night the twinkling lights of boats and barges at anchor and the flare and many-coloured glitter of Cremorne Gardens in the distance. At the end of Cheyne Walk lived the boatbuilder Greaves. "He had worked in Chelsea for years," write Mr. and Mrs. Pennell, in their *Life of Whistler*. "He had rowed Turner about on the river, and his two sons were to row Whistler. One of the sons, Mr. Walter Greaves, has told us that Mrs. Booth, a big, hard, coarse Scotchwoman, was always with Turner when he came for a boat. Turner would ask Greaves what kind of a day it was going to be, and if Greaves answered 'Fine,' he would get Greaves to row them across to Battersea Church, or to the fields, now Battersea Park. If Greaves was doubtful, Turner would say, 'Well, Mrs. Booth, we won't go far'; and afterwards for the sons—boys at the time—Turner in their memory was overshadowed by her." Whistler and the Greaves boys were up and down the river at all hours of the day and night and in all weathers, painting and sketching, they under his tuition, or gathering impressions and studying effects of light and shadow. He was frequently in at the Rossettis' house, and they and their friends were as frequently visiting him.

In 1867 Whistler moved to what is now 96 Cheyne Walk, and had a housewarming on the 5th of February at which the two Rossettis were present. Describing the decoration of the walls here, Mr. and Mrs. Pennell say its beauty was its simplicity. "Rossetti's house was a museum, an antiquity shop, in comparison. The simplicity seemed the more bewildering because it was the growth, not of weeks but of years. The drawing-room was not painted till the day of Whistler's first dinner-party. In the morning he sent for the brothers Greaves to help him. 'It will never be dry in time,' they feared. 'What matter?' said Whistler; 'it will be beautiful!' . . . and by evening the walls were flushed with flesh-colour, pale yellow and white spread over doors and woodwork, and we have heard that gowns and coats too were touched with flesh-colour and yellow before the evening was at an end. One Sunday morning Whistler, after he had taken his mother to Chelsea Church, as he always did, again sent for his pupils and painted a great ship with spreading sails in each of the two panels at the end of the hall; the ships are said to be still on the wall, covered up. His mother was not so pleased when, on her return, she saw the blue and white harmony, for she would have had him put away his brushes on Sunday as once she put away his toys."

Solitude was irksome to him, and he welcomed the motley crowd of artists and students who came in at all hours to chat with him whilst he worked. The Pennells tell a capital story of a man named Barthe, of whom Whistler had bought tapestries, and who, not being able to get his account settled, called one evening for the money. He was told that

WHISTLER
96 CHEYNE WALK
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Whistler was not in; but there was a cab waiting at the door, and he could hear his debtor's voice, so he pushed past the maid and, as he afterwards related, "Upstairs I find him, before a little picture, painting, and behind him ze bruzzers Greaves holding candles. And Vistlaire he say, 'You ze very man I vant: hold a candle!' And I hold a candle. And Vistlaire he paint, and he paint, and zen he take ze picture, and he go downstairs, and he get in ze cab, and he drive off, and we hold ze candle, and I see him no more. Mon Dieu, il est terrible, ce Vistlaire!"

His studio here was a back room on the second floor, and up to that studio, on many days of 1873, Carlyle climbed to give sittings for the portrait which ranks now with the greatest of Whistler's works. The portrait of his mother had already been painted in that same small room, and hung on the wall there whilst Carlyle was coming to life on the canvas. Carlyle was not a patient sitter. Directly he sat down he urged Whistler to "fire away," and was evidently anxious to get through with his part of the business as quickly as possible. "One day," says Whistler, "he told me of others who had painted his portrait. 'There was Mr. Watts, a mon of note. And I went to his studio, and there was much meestification, and screens were drawn, and I was not allowed to see anything. And then, at last, the screens were put aside and there I was. And I looked. And Mr. Watts, a great mon, he said to me, 'How do you like it?' And then I turned to Mr. Watts, and I said, 'Mon, I would have ye know I am in the hobit of wurin' clean lunen!'" There is a note in Allingham's Diary, dated July 29, 1873: "Carlyle tells me he is 'sitting'

to Whistler. If C. makes signs of changing his position W. screams out in an agonised tone, 'For God's sake, don't move!' C. afterwards said that all W.'s anxiety seemed to be to get the *coat* painted to ideal perfection; the face went for little. He had begun by asking two or three sittings, but managed to get a great many. At last C. flatly rebelled. He used to define W. as the most absurd creature on the face of the earth."

Whilst he was at 96 Cheyne Walk, Whistler brought his famous libel action against Ruskin, won it, but was awarded only a farthing damages, and had to pay his own costs. During the progress of the suit he was having the White House built for him in Tite Street, Chelsea, but the payment of his law costs so crippled him that he had to sell it before it was ready for occupation, and to sell off also the furniture and effects of his Cheyne Walk home.

None of these things seem, however, to have affected Whistler with worse than a temporary irritation. He wrote jestingly over his door: "Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it. E. W. Godwin, F.S.A., built this one;" turned his back upon the scenes of his recent disasters, and went to Venice. After rather more than a year of absence, he returned to London in the winter of 1880, stayed with his brother in Wimpole Street, put up at divers lodgings, had an exhibition in Bond Street, and in May 1881 took a studio at 13 Tite Street, Chelsea, and began to be the most talked-of man of the day. "He filled the papers with letters," write Mr. and Mrs. Pennell. "London echoed with his laugh. His white lock stood up defiantly above

his curls; his cane lengthened; a series of collars sprang from his long overcoat; his hat had a curlier brim, a lower tilt over his eyes; he invented amazing costumes. . . . He was known to pay calls with the long bamboo stick in his hand and pink bows on his shoes. He allowed no break in the gossip. The carriages brought crowds, but not sitters. Few would sit to him before the trial; after it there were fewer. In the seventies it needed courage to be painted by Whistler; now it was to risk notoriety and ridicule." When Mr. Pennell first saw him at 13 Tite Street, in July 1884, "he was all in white, his waistcoat had long sleeves, and every minute it seemed as if he must begin to juggle with glasses. For, to be honest, my first impression was of a bar-keeper strayed from a Philadelphia saloon into a Chelsea studio. Never had I seen such thick, black, curling hair. But in the midst was the white lock, and keen, brilliant eyes flashed at me from under the thick, bushy eyebrows."

From Tite Street, Whistler presently removed to 454 Fulham Road; thence to The Vale, Chelsea, a pleasant quarter which was a year or two ago wiped off the face of the earth; and in 1890 he was back again in Cheyne Walk, at No. 21. "I remember a striking remark of Whistler's at a garden-party in his Chelsea house," says M. Gerard Harry, who was one of Whistler's guests at No. 21. "As he caught me observing some incompletely furnished rooms and questioning within myself whether he had occupied the house more than a fortnight or so: 'You see,' he said, with his short laugh, 'I do not care for definitely settling down anywhere. Where there is no more space for improvement, or dreaming

about improvement, where mystery is in perfect shape, it is *finis*—the end—death. There is no hope nor outlook left.' I do not vouch for the words, but that was certainly the sense of a remark which struck me as offering a key to much of Whistler's philosophy, and to one aspect of his original art."

By 1892, in spite of himself and his fantastic and silly posings and posturings, the world had learned to take his art seriously instead of taking him so, and when he went away that year to live in Paris his greatness as a painter had become pretty generally recognised. In 1894 he came back to London with his wife, who was dying of cancer, and after her death in 1896 he lived with friends or in lodgings, and had no settled home, until in 1902 he once again took a house in Cheyne Walk, this time No. 74, a house which stands below the street level; its front windows overlook the Thames, and it had a large studio at the back. Here Mrs. and Miss Birnie Philip went to share house with him, for his health was breaking, and he was in need of companionship and attention. But there were good intervals, when he was able to work with all his old eagerness and energy. "We knew on seeing him when he was not so well," say Mr. and Mrs. Pennell, "for his costume of invalid remained original. He clung to a fur-lined overcoat worn into shabbiness. In his younger years he had objected to a dressing-gown as an unmanly concession; apparently he had not outgrown the objection, and on his bad days this shabby, worn-out overcoat was its substitute. Nor did the studio seem the most comfortable place for a man so ill as he was. It was bare, with little furniture, as his studios always were, and he had not used

it enough to give it the air of a workshop. The whole house showed that illness was reigning there." Trays and odds and ends of the sickroom lay about the hall; papers, books, and miscellaneous litter made the drawing-room and dining-room look disorderly. "When we saw Whistler in his big, shabby overcoat shuffling about the huge studio, he struck us as so old, so feeble and fragile, that we could imagine no sadder or more tragic figure. It was the more tragic because he had always been such a dandy, a word he would have been the first to use in reference to himself. . . . No one would have suspected the dandy in this forlorn little old man, wrapped in a worn overcoat, hardly able to walk."

He lingered thus for about a year; then the end came suddenly. On the 14th July 1903, Mrs. Pennell found him dressed and in his studio. "He seemed better, though his face was sunken, and in his eyes was that terrible vagueness. Now he talked, and a touch of gallantry was in his greeting, 'I wish I felt as well as you look.' He asked about Henley, the news of whose death had come a day or two before. . . . There was a return of vigour in his voice when Miss Birnie Philip brought him a cup of chicken broth, and he cried, 'Take the damned thing away,' and his old charm was in the apology that followed, but, he said, if he ate every half-hour or so, as the doctor wanted, how could he be expected to have an appetite for dinner? He dozed a little, but woke up quickly with a show of interest in everything." But on the evening of the 17th, he suddenly collapsed, and was dead before the doctor could be fetched to him.

Turner's last days in this same Cheyne Walk were

almost as sad, almost as piteous as Whistler's, but there is a haze of mystery about them, as there is about some of his paintings, and he had no butterfly past of dandyism to contrast painfully with the squalor of his ending. Born over the barber's shop kept by his father in Maiden Lane, Strand, he mounted to the seats of the immortals without acquiring by the way any taste for personal adornment, or for the elegancies or little prettinesses so beloved by little artists in his home surroundings. His soul was like a star, and could not make its heaven among the dainty chairs and tables and nice wall and mantelpiece ornaments of the drawing-room. On Stothard's advice (Stothard being one of the customers at the shaving shop) Turner's father made him an artist; he studied under Sir Joshua Reynolds, and later, Blake was one of his pupils. Growing in reputation, he lived by turns in Harley Street, at Hammersmith, at Twickenham, and is described in middle age as bluff and rough-mannered, and looking "the very moral of a master carpenter, with lobster-red face, twinkling staring grey eyes, white tie, blue coat with brass buttons, crab-shell turned-up boots, large fluffy hat, and enormous umbrella." From about 1815 onwards, he had a house that is no longer standing at 47 Queen Anne Street, Harley Street, and here, in 1843, when Turner was sixty-eight, a Mr. Hammersley called on him and has described (I quote from Mr. Lewis Hind's *Turner's Golden Visions*) how he "heard the shambling, slippered footstep coming down the stairs, the cold, cheerless room, the gallery, even less tidy and more forlorn, all confusion, mouldiness, and wretched litter; most of the pictures covered with uncleanly sheets,

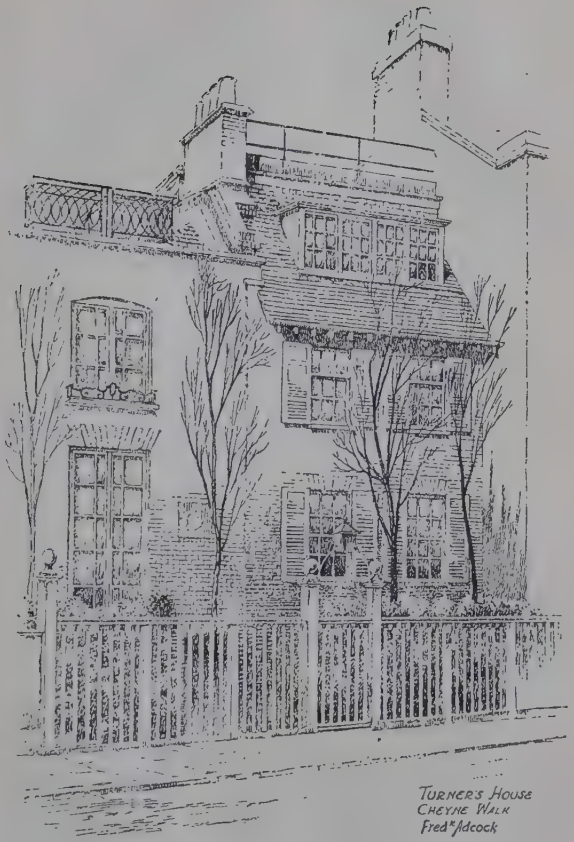
and the man! his loose dress, his ragged hair, his indifferent quiet—all, indeed, that went to make his physique and some of his mind; but above all I saw, felt (and feel still) his penetrating grey eye."

Somewhere between 1847 and 1848 Turner strangely disappeared from his customary haunts; his Queen Anne Street house was closed, the door kept locked, and his old housekeeper, Hannah Danby, could only assure anybody who came that he was not there, and that she simply did not know where he had gone. For the next four years or so, until he was dying, no one succeeded in discovering his hiding-place. Now and then, in the meantime, he would appear in a friend's studio, or would be met with at one of the Galleries, but he offered no explanation of his curious behaviour, and allowed no one to obtain any clue to his whereabouts. He went in 1850 to a dinner given by David Roberts, and was in good spirits, and bubbling over with laborious jokes. "Turner afterwards, in Roberts's absence, took the chair, and, at Stanfield's request, proposed Roberts's health, which he did, speaking hurriedly, but soon ran short of words and breath, and dropped down on his chair with a hearty laugh, starting up again and finishing with a 'Hip, hip, hurrah!' . . . Turner was the last who left, and Roberts accompanied him along the street to hail a cab. When the cab drove up, he assisted Turner to his seat, shut the door, and asked where he should tell cabby to take him; but Turner was not to be caught, and, with a knowing wink, replied, 'Tell him to drive to Oxford Street, and then I'll direct him where to go.'"

The fact is he was living at Cremorne Cottage,

119 Cheyne Walk. He was living there anonymously; a Mrs. Booth, whom he had known many years before when he stayed at her Margate boarding-house, was keeping house for him, and he was known in the neighbourhood as Admiral Booth, a rumour having got about that he was a retired naval officer fallen on evil days. This was the time of which the father of the Greaves boys had spoken to Whistler—the days when Mrs. Booth used to come with Turner to the waterside and he would row them over to Battersea. Though all his greatest work was finished, Turner painted several pictures here; he frequently rose at daybreak, and, wrapped in a blanket or a dressing-gown, stood out on the roof, leaning over the railing to watch the sunrise and the play of light on the river opposite. He used the room on the second floor as his studio, and in that room, on the 19th December 1851, he died. Some months before his death, he was seen at the Royal Academy's private view; then, tardily responding to a letter of friendly reproach that David Roberts had addressed to him at Queen Anne Street, he came to Roberts's studio in Fitzroy Square. He was "broken and ailing," and had been touched by Roberts's appeal, but as for disclosing his residence—"You must not ask me," he said; "but whenever I come to town I will always come to see you." When Roberts tried to cheer him, he laid his hand on his heart and murmured, "No, no! There is something here that is all wrong."

His illness increasing on him, he wrote to Margate for Dr. Price, an old acquaintance of his and Mrs. Booth's, and Price, coming up, examined him and told him there was no hope of his recovery. "Go



TURNER'S HOUSE
CHEYNE WALK
Fred^k Adcock

downstairs," he urged the doctor, "take a glass of sherry, and then look at me again." But a second examination only confirmed Dr. Price in his opinion.

It must have been at this juncture that Turner's hiding-place was discovered. His Queen Anne Street housekeeper, Hannah Danby, found a letter left in the pocket of one of his old coats, and this gave the Chelsea address. She went with another woman and made inquiries round about Cheyne Walk till it was clear enough to her that the Mr. Booth to whom that letter was directed was none other than Turner, and acting on her information Mr. Harpur, Turner's executor, journeyed at once to Chelsea, and arrived at 119 Cheyne Walk to find Turner sinking fast. Towards sunset, on that wintry day of his dying, he asked Mrs. Booth to wheel him to the window, and so gazing out on the wonder of the darkening sky he passed quietly away with his head on her shoulder.

A certain John Pye, a Chelsea engraver, afterwards interviewed the owner of No. 119, and learned from him that Turner and Mrs. Booth had, some four or five years before, called and taken the house of him, paying their rent in advance because they objected to giving any names or references. Pye also saw Mrs. Booth, and says she was a woman of fifty, illiterate, but "good-looking and kindly-mannered." Turner had used to call her "old 'un," she said, and she called him "dear"; and she explained that she had first got acquainted with him when, more than twenty years ago, "he became her lodger near the Custom House at Margate." So small was the shabby little house in Cheyne Walk that the undertakers were unable to carry the coffin up the narrow staircase, and

had to carry the body down to it. Nowadays, the house has been enlarged; it and the house next door have been thrown into one, otherwise it has undergone little change since Turner knew it.

Whilst Turner was thus passing out of life in Cheyne Walk, Carlyle was dwelling near by at No. 24 (then No. 5) Cheyne Row, and had been resident there for seventeen years. On first coming to London in 1830, he and his wife lodged at 33 Ampton Street, Gray's Inn Road. They spent, he says, "an interesting, cheery, and, in spite of poor arrangements, really pleasant winter" there; they had a "clean and decent pair of rooms," and their landlord's family consisted of "quiet, decent people." He wrote his essay on Dr. Johnson whilst he was here, and was making a fruitless search for a publisher who would accept *Sartor Resartus*, which he had recently completed. Jeffrey called there several times to pass an afternoon with him, and John Stuart Mill was one other of the many visitors who found their way to the drab, unlovely, rather shabby street to chat with the dour, middle-aged Scotch philosopher, who was only just beginning to be heard of.

He fixed on the Cheyne Row house in 1834, and, except for occasional holidays, never left it until his death forty-seven years afterwards. As soon as he was settled here Carlyle wrote to Sir William Hamilton, giving him his new address: "Our upholsterers, with all their rubbish and clippings, are at length swept handsomely out of doors. I have got my little book-press set up, my table fixed firm in its place, and sit here awaiting what Time and I, in our questionable wrestle, shall make out between us."

In another letter of about the same date he writes of it: "The street is flag-paved, sunk-storied, iron-railed, all old-fashioned and tightly done up, looks out on a rank of sturdy old pollarded (that is, beheaded) lime trees standing there like giants in tawtie wigs (for the new boughs are still young); beyond this a high brick wall; backwards a garden, the size of our back one at Comely Bank, with trees, &c., in bad culture; beyond this green hayfields and tree avenues, once a bishop's pleasure grounds, an unpicturesque but rather cheerful outlook. The house itself is eminent, antique, wainscoted to the very ceiling, and has been all new painted and repaired; broadish stair, with massive balustrade (in the old style), corniced and as thick as one's thigh; floors thick as rock, wood of them here and there worm-eaten, yet capable of cleanliness, and still with thrice the strength of a modern floor. Chelsea is a singular heterogeneous kind of spot, very dirty and confused in some places, quite beautiful in others, abounding in antiquities and the traces of great men—Sir Thomas More, Steele, Smollett, &c. Our Row, which for the last three doors or so is a street and none of the noblest, runs out upon a Parade (perhaps they call it) running along the shore of the river, a broad highway with huge shady trees, boats lying moored, and a smell of shipping and tar."

A note in Allingham's Diary (1860) offers you a very clear little picture of Carlyle's garden here, as he saw it: "In Carlyle's garden, some twenty yards by six; ivy at the end. Three or four lilac bushes; an ash stands on your left; a little copper beech on your right gives just an umbrella to sit under when the sun is

hot; a vine or two on one wall, neighboured by a jasmine—one pear tree."

In this Cheyne Row house Carlyle wrote all his books, except *Sartor* and some of the miscellaneous essays; here he entertained, not always very willingly or very graciously, most of the great men of his day; quarrelled with his neighbours furiously over the crowing of their cocks; was pestered by uninvited, admiring callers from all over the world; and had his room on the top floor furnished with double-windows that were supposed to render it sound-proof, but did not. Charles Boner, visiting 24 Cheyne Row in 1862, disturbed Carlyle as he sat in his dressing-gown and slippers correcting the proofs of his *Frederick the Great*, whilst Mrs. Carlyle remained in attendance, seated on a sofa by the fire.

In 1866 Mrs. Carlyle died suddenly of heart failure, and left him burdened with remorse that he had not been kinder to her and made her life happier; and after two years of lonely living without her, he writes: "I am very idle here, very solitary, which I find to be oftenest less miserable to me than the common society that offers. Except Froude almost alone, whom I see once a week, there is hardly anybody whose talk, always polite, clear, sharp, and sincere, does me any considerable good. . . . I am too weak, too languid, too sad of heart, too unfit for any work, in fact, to care sufficiently for any object left me in the world to think of grappling round it and coercing it by work. A most sorry dog-kennel it oftenest all seems to me, and wise words, if one ever had them, to be only thrown away on it. Basta-basta, I for most part say of it, and look with longings towards the still country where

CARLYLE
AMPTON STREET.
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at last we and our loved ones shall be together again."

You will get no better or more intimate glimpses into Carlyle's home life than Allingham gives in his Diary. Sometimes they are merely casual and scrappy notes, at others fairly full records of his walks and talks with him, such as this: "1873, *April* 28.—At Carlyle's house about three. He spent about fifteen minutes in trying to clear the stem of a long clay pipe with a brass wire, and in the end did not succeed. The pipe was new, but somehow obstructed. At last he sent for another one and smoked, and we got out at last. (I never saw him smoke in public.) He said Emerson had called on him on Sunday, and he meant to visit E. to-day at his lodging in Down Street. We walked to Hyde Park by Queen's Gate, and westward along the broad walk, next to the ride, with the Serpentine a field distant on the left hand. This was a favourite route of his. I was well content to have the expectation of seeing Emerson again, and, moreover, Emerson and Carlyle together. We spoke of Masson's *Life of Milton*, a volume of which was on C.'s table. He said Masson's praise of Milton was exaggerated. 'Milton had a gift in poetry—of a particular kind. *Paradise Lost* is absurd; I never could take to it all—though now and again clouds of splendour rolled in upon the scene.' . . . At Hyde Park Corner, C. stopped and looked at the clock. 'You are going to Down Street, sir?' 'No, it's too late.' 'The place is close at hand.' 'No, no, it's half-past five.' So he headed for Knightsbridge, and soon after I helped him into a Chelsea omnibus, banning internally the clay pipe (value a halfpenny

farthing) through which this chance (perhaps the last, for Emerson is going away soon) was lost."

There are numerous entries in the Diary of visits and conversations of this sort. On October 18, 1879, Allingham called at Cheyne Row with his little son, and they met Carlyle coming out of the door to his carriage. On December 4, of the same year: "Helen and I to Cheyne Row. Carlyle's eighty-fourth birthday. Mrs. Lecky there. Browning and Ruskin are gone. C. on his sofa by the window, warm and quiet, wearing a new purple and gold cap. Gifts of flowers on the table. . . ." Some of the swift little word-sketches of Carlyle at this date, when he was very old, very feeble, and apt to be oppressed with gloom, are piteous and pathetic enough. On his eighty-fifth birthday (December 4, 1880) Allingham found him easier and more himself; but on Friday, December 24, you read: "To Carlyle's at two. He was lying on the sofa in the drawing-room. When I spoke to him he held out his hand and shook hands with me, but said nothing. I was not sure that he knew me. A stout Scotch servant girl and I lifted him to his feet to go to the carriage. In the hall his heavy sealskin coat was put on with difficulty, and he was got into the carriage. Alick and I with him. We drove twice round Hyde Park. The old man dozed much."

Earlier that year, the two sons of Alexander Munro called at Cheyne Row, and in a letter home the elder of them gave a wonderfully poignant and living account of their visit. Munro, who was dead, had been one of Carlyle's old friends, and the two boys were now at school at the Charterhouse. They were conducted

upstairs, says the letter, to a well-lighted, cheerful apartment, and here " the maid went forward and said something to Carlyle, and left the room. He was sitting before a fire in an arm-chair, propped up with pillows, with his feet on a stool, and looked much older than I had expected. The lower part of his face was covered with a rather shaggy beard, almost quite white. His eyes were bright blue, but looked filmy from age. He had on a sort of coloured nightcap, and a long gown reaching to his ankles, and slippers on his feet. A rest attached to the arm of his chair supported a book before him. I could not quite see the name, but I think it was Channing's works. Leaning against the fireplace was a long clay pipe, and there was a slight smell of tobacco in the room. We advanced and shook hands, and he invited us to sit down, and began, I think, by asking where we were living. He talked of our father affectionately, speaking in a low tone as if to himself, and stopping now and then for a moment and sighing. . . . He went on, ' I am near the end of my course, and the sooner the better is my own feeling.' He said he still reads a little, but has not many books he cares to read now, and is ' continually disturbed by foolish interruptions from people who do not know the value of an old man's leisure.' His hands were very thin and wasted ; he showed us how they shook and trembled unless he rested them on something, and said they were failing him from weakness." And, at length, closing the interview, " ' Well, I'll just bid you good-bye.' We shook hands. He asked our names. He could not quite hear Henry's at first. ' I am a little deaf, but I can hear well enough talking,' or words to that effect.

'I wish you God's blessing; good-bye.' We shook hands once more and went away. I was not at all shy. He seemed such a venerable old man, and so worn and old-looking, that I was very much affected. Our visit was on Tuesday, May 18, 1880, at about 2 P.M."

He died in the following February; after lying motionless and seemingly unconscious for hours, he passed quietly soon after eight on the morning of February 5, 1881. His bed, says Allingham, had been brought down to the drawing-room (the front room on the first floor), and he rarely spoke in the last two or three weeks, not so much because he could not as because he did not seem to wish to say anything. Newspaper reporters were so continually ringing at the door, day and night, that bulletins had to be posted outside to prevent this. Now and then he appeared to wander in his mind, and when the Scotch maid, Mary, was attending upon him he would sometimes murmur, "Poor little woman," as if he mistook her for his long-dead Jenny; and once, says Allingham, "he supposed the female hands that tended him, lifting his head, perhaps, to be those of his good old mother—'Ah, mother, is it you?' he murmured, or some such words. I think it was on the day before the last day that Mary heard him saying to himself, 'So this is Death: well——'"

But the Cheyne Row house has many happy memories too, and I always think one of the happiest is that of how Leigh Hunt called once after a long absence, and brought with him word of some unexpected good news that so delighted Mrs. Carlyle that she impulsively ran to him and kissed him, and

LEIGH HUNT'S HOUSE
CHELSEA.
Fred^k Adcock

he went away to write that charming little rondeau that bids fair to outlive all his more ambitious poetry :

> "Jenny kissed me when we met,
> Jumping from the chair she sat in;
> Time, you thief, who love to get
> Sweets into your list, put that in:
> Say I'm weary, say I'm sad,
> Say that health and wealth have missed me,
> Say I'm growing old—but add,
> Jenny kissed me."

Leigh Hunt was turned fifty then, and was Carlyle's neighbour, living at No. 10 (then No. 4) Upper Cheyne Row. I have seen it said that Leigh Hunt went there in order to be near Carlyle, but his occupancy of that house dates from 1833—the year before Carlyle established himself in Chelsea—and he remained there until 1840, seven years of poverty and worry, when it was literal truth that he was weary and sad, in indifferent health, harassed for want of money, and growing old, yet you find him never losing hope, and always ready on the smallest excuse to rejoice and make light of his troubles. I am afraid Dickens's caricature of Hunt as Harold Skimpole, and Byron's contemptuous references to his vanity and vulgarity and the squalor of his easy-going home life (his children, said Byron, "are dirtier and more mischievous than Yahoos," and writing of their arrival in Italy as Shelley's guests he observes, "Poor Hunt, with his six little blackguards, are coming slowly up ; as usual he turned back once—was there ever such a kraal out of the Hottentot country ? ")—I am rather afraid these things have tended to wrong Hunt in our imagination of him, for you learn on other evidence that there is just

enough truth in those representations of him to make them seem quite true, and they linger in your mind, and affect your regard and admiration of the man in spite of yourself. But Dickens, with his keen sense of the absurd, had a habit of exaggeration; there was no ill-nature in his laughter—he merely seized on certain of Hunt's weaknesses and gave them to a character who has none of Hunt's finer qualities, and it is ridiculous in us and unfair to both men to take that caricature as a portrait. As for Byron—he could not justly appraise Hunt, for he had no means of understanding him. His own way of life was made too easy for him from the first; he was not born to Hunt's difficulties and disadvantages; his experiences of the world, and therefore his sympathies, were too limited. There is no merit in living elegantly and playing the gentleman when you simply inherit, as the fruits of an ancestor's abilities, all the conveniences and the money that enable you to do so. On the whole, if you compare their lives, you will realise that Leigh Hunt was by far the greater man of the two, even if Byron was the greater poet, and I am more than a little inclined to agree with Charles Lamb that even as a poet Byron was "great in so little a way. To be a poet is to be the man, not a petty portion of occasional low passion worked up in a permanent form of humanity. Shakespeare has thrust such rubbishy feelings into a corner—the dark, dusty heart of Don John, in the *Much Ado about Nothing*."

Shelley never speaks of Leigh Hunt but in the kindliest terms. He was "gentle, honourable, innocent, and brave," writes Shelley; "one of more exalted toleration for all who do and think evil, and

yet himself more free from evil; one of simpler and, in the highest sense of the word, purer life and manners, I never knew." He is, he says in the *Letter to Maria Gisborne:*

> "One of those happy souls
> Which are the salt of the earth, and without whom
> This earth would smell like what it is—a tomb."

Hunt tells in his *Autobiography* how he came to Chelsea, and gives a glowing description of his house there. He left St. John's Wood, and then his home in the New Road (now Marylebone Road), because he found the clay soil of the one and the lack of quiet around the other affected his health, or "perhaps it was only the melancholy state of our fortune" that was answerable for that result; anyhow, from the noise and dust of the New Road he removed to Upper Cheyne Row—"to a corner in Chelsea," as he says, "where the air of the neighbouring river was so refreshing and the quiet of the 'no-thoroughfare' so full of repose, that although our fortunes were at their worst, and my health almost at a piece with them, I felt for some weeks as if I could sit still for ever, embalmed in silence. I got to like the very cries in the street, for making me the more aware of it by the contrast. I fancied they were unlike the cries in other quarters of the suburbs, and that they retained something of the old quaintness and melodiousness which procured them the reputation of having been composed by Purcell and others. . . . There was an old seller of fish, in particular, whose cry of 'Shrimps as large as prawns' was such a regular, long-drawn, and truly pleasing melody that, in spite of his hoarse and, I am

afraid, drunken voice, I used to wish for it of an evening, and hail it when it came. . . .

"I know not whether the corner I speak of remains as quiet as it was. I am afraid not; for steamboats have carried vicissitude into Chelsea, and Belgravia threatens it with her mighty advent. But to complete my sense of repose and distance, the house was of that old-fashioned sort which I have always loved best, familiar to the eyes of my parents, and associated with childhood. It had seats in the windows, a small third room on the first floor, of which I made a sanctum, into which no perturbation was to enter, except to calm itself with religious and cheerful thoughts; and there were a few limes in front which, in their due season, diffused a fragrance. In this house we remained seven years; in the course of which, besides contributing some articles to the *Edinburgh* and *Westminster Reviews*, and producing a good deal of the book since called *The Town*, I set up (in 1834) the *London Journal*, endeavoured to continue the *Monthly Repository*, and wrote the poem entitled *Captain Sword and Captain Pen*, the *Legend of Florence*, and three other plays. Here also I became acquainted with Thomas Carlyle, one of the kindest and best, as well as most eloquent of men. . . . I believe that what Mr. Carlyle loves better than his fault-finding, with all its eloquence, is the face of any human creature that looks suffering, and loving, and sincere; and I believe further that if the fellow-creature were suffering only, and neither loving nor sincere, but had come to a pass of agony in this life which put him at the mercies of some good man for some last help and consolation towards his grave, even at the risk of loss to

repute and a sure amount of pain and vexation, that man, if the groan reached him in its forlornness, would be Thomas Carlyle."

He wrote that from his personal experience of Carlyle, for whilst they were neighbours at Chelsea they frequently visited each other; and Carlyle, on his part, saw the worst as well as the best of him, from the inside, and was too large-minded and too big a man to judge him by his faults and follies only. He saw how Hunt worked, all the while haunted by pecuniary distresses; unpaid tradesmen knocking at his door and worrying for their debts; once an execution in the house; now and then faced with the humiliation of having to ask for loans of a few shillings to buy the family dinner; his children almost in rags, and himself, as he said bitterly, slighted and neglected by editors and the public, and "carelessly, over-familiarly, or even superciliously treated, pitied or patronised by his inferiors." Carlyle had known poverty and neglect himself; he was fitted to judge Hunt understandingly, and he judged him justly. "Leigh Hunt was a fine kind of man," he told Allingham in 1868. "Some used to talk of him as a frivolous fellow, but when I saw him I found he had a face as serious as death." In his Diary he noted, "Hunt is always ready to go and walk with me, or sit and talk with me to all lengths if I want him. He comes in once a week (when invited, for he is very modest), takes a cup of tea, and sits discoursing in his brisk, fanciful way till supper time, and then cheerfully eats a cup of porridge (to sugar only), which he praises to the skies, and vows he will make his supper of it at home."

It was Mrs. Carlyle who was severe about the

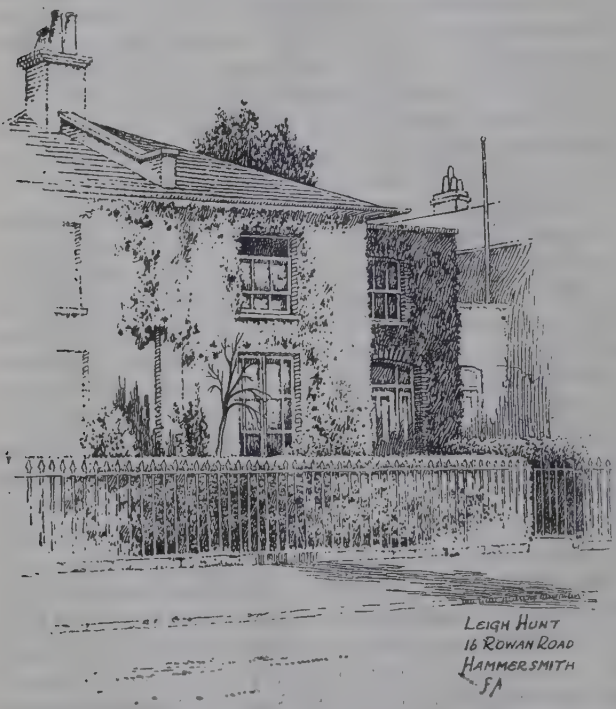
Hunts' untidy and uncleanly household, and complained of the domestic utensils they borrowed and failed to return, but Carlyle took the position in a more genial spirit, and saw the pity of it and the humour of it also. "Hunt's house," he wrote after one of his visits to No. 10 Upper Cheyne Row, "excels all you have ever read of—a poetical Tinkerdom without parallel even in literature. In his family room, where are a sickly, large wife and a whole school of well-conditioned wild children, you will find half-a-dozen old rickety chairs gathered from half-a-dozen different hucksters, and all seemingly engaged, and just pausing, in a violent hornpipe. On these and around them and over the dusty table and ragged carpet lie all kinds of litter—books, papers, egg-shells, scissors, and last night when I was there the torn heart of a quartern loaf. His own room above stairs, into which alone I strive to enter, he keeps cleaner. It has only two chairs, a bookcase, and a writing-table; yet the noble Hunt receives you in his Tinkerdom in the spirit of a king, apologises for nothing, places you in the best seat, takes a window-sill himself if there is no other, and then folding closer his loose-flowing 'muslin cloud' of a printed nightgown in which he always writes, commences the liveliest dialogue on philosophy and the prospects of man (who is to be beyond measure 'happy' yet); which again he will courteously terminate the moment you are bound to go. A most interesting, pitiable, lovable man, to be used kindly, but with discretion."

Hunt departed from Chelsea, with all his anxieties, in 1840, and took up residence at 32 Edwardes Square, Kensington, where he got through with a great deal

of work, and one way and another was secured at last above his financial embarrassments. Dickens, Jerrold, Forster and some other friends raised £900 for him by a benefit performance of *Every Man in his Humour;* the Government granted him two sums of £200, and then a Civil List Pension of £200 a year, to the obtaining of which Carlyle readily lent all his influence. Moreover, the Shelley family settled an annuity of £120 upon him. But, with all these material advantages, came the death of his wife and one of his sons. "She was as uncomplaining during the worst storms of our adversity," Hunt wrote of his wife, reminiscently, "as she was during those at sea in our Italian voyage."

He was an old and rather solitary man when he moved from Kensington in 1853 and went to 7 Cornwall Road, now known as 16 Rowan Road, Hammersmith Road, but he had an ample and sure income, and was no longer haunted by duns, if he could not indulge in much in the way of luxury. When Nathaniel Hawthorne was in England he went to see him at Hammersmith, and found the house in Rowan Road plain, small, shabby, Hunt's little study cheaply papered, sparely carpeted, and furnished meanly, and Hunt himself "a beautiful and venerable old man, buttoned to the chin in a black dress coat, tall and slender, with a countenance quietly alive all over, and the gentlest and most naturally courteous manner." At Rowan Road he wrote most of his *Old Court Suburb,* in the preface to a recent edition of which Mr. Austin Dobson says of the Leigh Hunt of those closing days, "He was still the old sensitive, luminous-eyed Leigh Hunt of the wide collar and floating printed nightgown, delighted with a flower or a bird or a

butterfly; but Time had snowed upon his pericranium, and to his breezy *robe de chambre* he had added, or was about to add, a protective cape, more or less



ample, of faded black silk, which gave him the air (says John Forster) of an old French Abbé." He died away from home in 1859, whilst he was on a short visit to a relative at Putney.

THE CHARTERHOUSE.
FROM THE SQUARE.
SA.

CHAPTER XIV

THACKERAY

No other literary Londoner has taken root as Carlyle did in Cheyne Row and remained for nearly half a century without once changing his address. Thackeray shifted about from place to place nearly as much as most of them. He went to school at the Charterhouse, and for a year or two had lodgings over a shop in Wilderness Row, Clerkenwell; in the first years after his marriage he lived in Albion Street; he had chambers in the Temple, at Hare Court, in Crown Office Row, and at Brick Court. *The Paris Sketch Book* was written whilst he was living at 13 Great Coram Street, in 1840, and it was there that his wife began to suffer from the sad mental disorder that was presently to take her from him for the rest of his days. In August 1846 he gave up his lodgings in St. James's Chambers, and drew his broken home life together again at 16 Young Street, Kensington. "I am beginning to count the days now till you come," he wrote to his mother, with whom his two little daughters were staying in Paris; "and I have got the rooms all ready in the rough, all but a couple of bedsteads, and a few etceteras, which fall into their place in a day or two. As usual, I am full of business and racket, working every day, and yet not advancing somehow." He was industriously turning out drawings and jokes

and articles and verses for *Punch* and *Fraser's Magazine*, and hard at work on the great novel that was to make him famous—*Vanity Fair*.

"It was not till late in the autumn that we came to live with my father in Kensington," writes Lady Ritchie, in one of her delightful prefaces to the Centenary Edition of Thackeray's works. "We had been at Paris with our grandparents—while he was at work in London. It was a dark, wintry evening. The fires were lighted, the servants were engaged, Eliza—what family would be complete without its Eliza?—was in waiting to show us our rooms. He was away; he had not expected us so early. We saw the drawing-room, the empty study; there was the feeling of London—London smelt of tobacco, we thought; we stared out through the uncurtained windows at the dark garden behind; and then, climbing the stairs, we looked in at his bedroom door, and came to our own rooms above it. . . . Once more, after his first happy married years, my father had a home and a family—if a house, two young children, three servants, and a little black cat can be called a family. My grandmother, who had brought us over to England, returned to her husband in Paris; but her mother, an old lady wrapped in Indian shawls, presently came to live with us, and divided her time between Kensington and the Champs Elysees until 1848, when she died at Paris."

Thackeray's first name for *Vanity Fair* was *Pencil Sketches of English Society*. He offered the opening chapters of it under that title to Colburn for his *New Monthly Magazine*. Thereafter he seems to have reshaped the novel and renamed it, and even then had

difficulty to find a publisher. At length, Messrs. Bradbury & Evans accepted it, and it was arranged that it should be published after the manner that Dickens had already rendered popular—in monthly parts; and the first part duly appeared on the 1st January 1847, in the familiar yellow wrappers that served to distinguish Thackeray's serials from the green-covered serials of Dickens. But the sales of the first half-dozen numbers were by no means satisfactory.

"I still remember," writes Lady Ritchie, "going along Kensington Gardens with my sister and our nursemaid, carrying a parcel of yellow numbers which had been given us to take to some friend who lived across the Park; and as we walked along, somewhere near the gates of the gardens we met my father, who asked us what we were carrying. Then somehow he seemed vexed and troubled, told us not to go on, and to take the parcel home. Then he changed his mind, saying that if his grandmother wished it, the books had best be conveyed; but we guessed, as children do, that something was seriously amiss. The sale of *Vanity Fair* was so small that it was a question at the time whether its publication should not be discontinued altogether."

At that critical juncture he published *Mrs. Perkins's Ball*, which caught on at once, and this and a favourable review in the *Edinburgh* are supposed to have sent the public after the novel, for the sales of *Vanity Fair* rapidly increased, and the monthly numbers were soon selling briskly enough to satisfy even the publishers, and so in his thirty-seventh year Thackeray found himself famous. James Hannay

first saw him when the book was still unfinished but its success assured. He says that Thackeray pointed out to him the house in Russell Square "where the imaginary Sedleys lived," and that when he congratulated him on that scene in *Vanity Fair* in which Becky Sharp cannot help feeling proud of her husband whilst he is giving Lord Steyne the thrashing that must ruin all her own chances, Thackeray answered frankly, "Well, when I wrote that sentence I slapped my fist on the table and said, 'That is a touch of genius!'" Which reminds one of the story told by Ticknor Fields of how, when he was making a pilgrimage around London with Thackeray in later years, and they paused outside 16 Young Street, which was no longer his home, the novelist cried with a melodramatic gesture, "Go down on your knees, you rogue, for here *Vanity Fair* was penned, and I will go down with you, for I have a high opinion of that little production myself!"

His letters of 1847 and the early half of 1848 are full of references to the strenuous toil with which he is writing his monthly instalments of *Vanity Fair*, and in one of them, to Edward Fitzgerald, he mentions that he is giving a party: "Mrs. Dickens and Miss Hogarth made me give it, and I am in a great fright." Perhaps that was the famous party to which Charlotte Brontë, Carlyle and his wife, and other of his great contemporaries came, and things went wrong, and he became so uncomfortable that he fairly bolted from his guests, and went to spend the rest of the evening at the Garrick Club.

Pendennis was written at the Young Street house, and Thackeray put a good deal of himself into that

hero of his. Pen had chambers at Lamb Building, in the Temple, and there is some likeness between his early journalistic experiences and Thackeray's own. The opening chapters of *Pendennis*, though, were written at Spa. Thackeray had wanted to get away to some seaside place where he could set to work on his new book, and had asked his mother, who was going to Brighton, if she could not get a house for £60 that would have three spare rooms in it for him. "As for the dignity, I don't believe it matters a pinch of snuff. Tom Carlyle lives in perfect dignity in a little £40 house at Chelsea, with a snuffy Scotch maid to open the door, and the best company in England ringing at it. It is only the second or third chop great folks who care about show."

In *Pendennis* there is an allusion to Catherine Hayes, the dreadful heroine of Thackeray's *Catherine*, that had been published a few years before, and a hot-tempered young Irishman, believing the reference was to Miss Catherine Hayes, the Irish vocalist, chivalrously came over to England, took lodgings opposite Thackeray's house in Young Street, and sent him a warning letter that he was on the watch for him to come out of doors, and intended to administer public chastisement by way of avenging Miss Hayes's injured honour. After getting through his morning's work, Thackeray felt the position was intolerable, so he walked straightway out across the road, knocked at the opposite door, and boldly bearded the lion in his den. The young Irishman was disposed to bluster and be obstinate, but Thackeray explained matters, calmed him, convinced him that he had made a mistake, parted from him amicably, and had the

satisfaction of seeing the young fire-eater come forth on his way back home that evening.

Writing of *Pendennis*, Lady Ritchie says, "I can remember the morning Helen died. My father was in his study in Young Street, sitting at the table at which he wrote. It stood in the middle of the room, and he used to sit facing the door. I was going into the room, but he motioned me away. An hour afterwards he came into our schoolroom, half laughing and half ashamed, and said to us, 'I do not know what James can have thought of me when he came in with the tax-gatherer just after you left and found me blubbering over Helen Pendennis's death.'"

At Young Street, Thackeray wrote also his *Lectures on the English Humorists*, and having delivered them with gratifying success at Willis's Rooms, he journeyed to America in 1852, and was even more successful with them there. Meanwhile, he had written *Esmond*, and it was published in three volumes just before he left England. "Thackeray I saw for ten minutes," Fitzgerald wrote to Frederick Tennyson concerning a flying visit he had paid to London; "he was just in the agony of finishing a novel, which has arisen out of the reading necessary for his lectures, and relates to those times—of Queen Anne, I mean. He will get £1000 for his novel; he was wanting to finish it and rush off to the Continent to shake off the fumes of it." His two daughters, both now in their teens, were sent out to join their grandparents before he sailed for the States, and in a letter to Anne (Lady Ritchie) he explains his motive in crossing the Atlantic: "I must and will go to America, not because I want to, but because it is right I should secure some

money against my death for your poor mother and you two girls."

There are several drawings made by Thackeray in those Young Street days of his daughters and himself, and one of his study at breakfast time, and here is a word-picture of the study given by Lady Ritchie in her preface to *Esmond:* "The vine shaded the two windows, which looked out upon the bit of garden and the medlar-tree, and the Spanish jasmines, of which the yellow flowers scented our old brick walls. I can remember the tortoise belonging to the boys next door crawling along the top of the wall where they had set it, and making its way between the jasmine sprigs. . . . Our garden was not tidy (though on one grand occasion a man came to mow the grass), but it was full of sweet things. . . . Lady Duff Gordon came to stay with us once (it was on that occasion that the grass was mowed), and she afterwards sent us some doves, which used to hang high up in a wicker cage from the windows of the schoolroom. The schoolroom was over my father's bedroom, and his bedroom was over the study where he used to write, and they all looked to the garden and the sunsets."

On his return from the American lecturing, in 1853, when he had already made a beginning of *The Newcomes*, he gave up the Young Street house and moved to 36 Onslow Square, South Kensington (or Brompton, as it was called at that period); and during the seven years of his residence there he finished *The Newcomes*, wrote *The Four Georges*, *The Virginians*, many of the *Roundabout Papers*, began the writing of *Philip*, and founded and entered upon his duties as

editor of the *Cornhill Magazine*. The front room on the second floor was his study.

It was whilst Thackeray was living here that the quarrel occurred between him and Edmund Yates, who had contributed a smart personal article to *Town Talk*, on the 12th June 1858, in the course of which he wrote: "Mr. Thackeray is forty-six years old, though from the silvery whiteness of his hair he appears somewhat older. He is very tall, standing upwards of six feet two inches; and as he walks erect his height makes him conspicuous in every assembly. His face is bloodless, and not particularly expressive, but remarkable for the fracture of the bridge of the nose, the result of an accident in youth. He wears a small grey whisker, but otherwise is clean shaven. No one meeting him could fail to recognise in him a gentleman; his bearing is cold and uninviting, his style of conversation either openly cynical, or affectedly good-natured and benevolent; his *bonhomie* is forced, his wit biting, his pride easily touched—but his appearance is invariably that of the cool, suave, well-bred gentleman who, whatever may be rankling within, suffers no surface display of his emotion." He went on to discuss Thackeray's work, and said unjustly of his lectures that in this country he flattered the aristocracy and in America he attacked it, the attacks being contained in *The Four Georges*, which "have been dead failures in England, though as literary compositions they are most excellent. Our own opinion is that his success is on the wane; his writings never were understood or appreciated even by the middle classes; the aristocracy have been alienated by his American onslaught

on their body, and the educated and refined are not sufficiently numerous to constitute an audience; moreover, there is a want of heart in all he writes which is not to be balanced by the most brilliant sarcasm."

The description of Thackeray's personal appearance here is perhaps rather impertinently frank, but it is clever and pictorially good; for the rest—we who know now what a generous, kindly, almost too sentimentally tender heart throbbed within that husk of cynicism and sarcasm in which he protectively enfolded it, know that Yates was writing of what he did not understand. Unfortunately, however, Thackeray took him seriously, and wrote a letter of dignified but angry protest to him, especially against the imputation of insincerity when he spoke good-naturedly in private. "Had your remarks been written by a person unknown to me, I should have noticed them no more than other calumnies; but as we have shaken hands more than once and met hitherto on friendly terms, I am obliged to take notice of articles which I consider to be not offensive and unfriendly merely, but slanderous and untrue. We meet at a club where, before you were born, I believe, I and other gentlemen have been in the habit of talking without any idea that our conversation would supply paragraphs for professional vendors of 'Literary Talk'; and I don't remember that out of the club I have ever exchanged six words with you."

Yates replied, and "rather than have further correspondence with a writer of that character," Thackeray put the letters before the committee of the Garrick Club, asking them to decide whether the

publication of such an article as Yates had written was not intolerable in a society of gentlemen and fatal to the comfort of the club. The committee resolved that Yates must either apologise or resign his membership. Then Dickens, thinking the committee were exceeding their powers, intervened on Yates's behalf; wrote to Thackeray in a conciliatory strain, and asked if any conference could be held between himself, as representing Yates, and some friend who should represent Thackeray, with a view to arriving at a friendly settlement of the unpleasantness. This apparently well-intentioned interference annoyed Thackeray; he curtly replied that he preferred to leave his interests in the hands of the club committee, and as a result he and Dickens were bitterly estranged. That the friendship between two such men should have been broken by such a petty incident was deplorable enough, but happily, only a few days before Thackeray's death, they chanced to meet in the lobby of the Athenæum, and by a mutual impulse each offered his hand to the other, and the breach was healed.

In 1862 Thackeray made his last change of address, and went to No. 2 Palace Green, Kensington, a large and handsome house that he had built for himself. Some of his friends thought that in building it he had spent his money recklessly, but he did it in pursuance of the desire, that crops up so frequently in his correspondence, to make some provision for the future of his children; and when, after his death, it was sold for £2000 more than it had cost him, he was sufficiently justified. It was in this house that he finished *Philip*, and, having retired from the editing

of the *Cornhill*, began to write *Denis Duval*, but died on Christmas Eve 1863, leaving it little more than well begun. When he was writing *Pendennis* he had been near death's door, and ever since he had suffered from attacks of sickness almost every month. He was not well when his valet left him at eleven on the night of the 23rd December; about midnight his mother, whose bedroom was immediately over his, heard him walking about his room; at nine next morning, when his valet went in with his coffee, he saw him "lying on his back quite still, with his arms spread over the coverlet, but he took no notice, as he was accustomed to see his master thus after one of his attacks." Returning later, and finding the coffee untouched on the table beside the bed, he felt a sudden apprehension, and was horrified to discover that Thackeray was dead.

Yates has told how the rumour of his death ran through the clubs and was soon all about the town, and of how, wherever it went, it left a cloud over everything that Christmas Eve; and I have just turned up one of my old *Cornhill* volumes to read again what Dickens and Trollope wrote of him in the number for February 1864. "I saw him first," says Dickens, "nearly twenty-eight years ago, when he proposed to be the illustrator of my earliest book. I saw him last, shortly before Christmas, at the Athenæum Club, when he told me that he had been in bed three days—that after these attacks he was troubled with cold shiverings, 'which quite took the power of work out of him'—and that he had it in his mind to try a new remedy, which he laughingly described. He was very cheerful, and looked very bright. In the night of that day week, he died."

Dickens goes on to give little instances of his kindness, of his great and good nature; and then describes how he was found lying dead. "He was only in his fifty-third year; so young a man that the mother who blessed him in his first sleep blessed him in his last." And says Trollope, no one is thinking just then of the greatness of his work—"The fine grey head, the dear face with its gentle smile, the sweet, manly voice which we knew so well, with its few words of kindest greeting; the gait and manner, the personal presence of him whom it so delighted us to encounter in our casual comings and goings about the town—it is of these things, and of these things lost for ever, that we are now thinking. We think of them as treasures which are not only lost, but which can never be replaced. He who knew Thackeray will have a vacancy in his heart's inmost casket which must remain vacant till he dies. One loved him almost as one loves a woman, tenderly and with thoughtfulness—thinking of him when away from him as a source of joy which cannot be analysed, but is full of comfort. One who loved him, loved him thus because his heart was tender, as is the heart of a woman."

CHAPTER XV

DICKENS

THACKERAY'S London was practically bounded on the east by the Temple, or perhaps by the Fleet Prison, which lay a little beyond the *Punch* office ; it took in the Strand, Pall Mall, Piccadilly, and stretched out westward round Belgravia, Mayfair, Chiswick, and such selecter quarters of the town. But Dickens made the whole of London his province ; you cannot go into any part of it but he has been there before you ; if he did not at one time live there himself, some of his characters did. Go north through Somers Town and Camden Town : the homes of his boyhood were there in Bayham Street, in Little College Street, in the house that still stands at 13 Johnson Street, from which he walked daily to school at the Wellington House Academy in Hampstead Road. He lived in Cleveland Street, Fitzroy Square, and in Fitzroy Street, and whilst his father was a prisoner in the Marshalsea for debt and he himself was labelling bottles at the blacking factory in Hungerford Market, he had lodgings south of London Bridge in Lant Street, which were the originals of the lodgings he gave to Bob Sawyer in later years when he came to write *Pickwick*. When he was turned twenty, and working as a Parliamentary reporter in the House of Commons, and beginning to contribute his *Sketches by Boz* to the

Monthly Magazine, he lived at 18 Bentinck Street, Cavendish Square. For a time he had lodgings in Buckingham Street, Strand, and afterwards lodged David Copperfield in the same rooms; he put up for a short time at Fulham before his marriage at St. Luke's Church, Chelsea, in April 1836, and after a brief honeymoon returned with his wife to the chambers in Furnival's Inn that he had rented since the previous year. He had three other London houses during his more prosperous days; then he quitted the town and went to live at Gad's Hill Place, where he died in 1870. But even after he was thus settled in Kent, he was continually up and down to the office of *Household Words*, in Wellington Street, Strand, and for some part of almost every year he occupied a succession of furnished houses round about Hyde Park.

A few months before his marriage he had started to write *Pickwick*, the first monthly part of which appeared in March 1836. Before the end of next month, Seymour, the artist who was illustrating that serial, having committed suicide, Thackeray went up

to the Furnival's Inn chambers with specimens of his drawings in the hope of becoming his successor, but Dickens rejected him in favour of Hablot K. Browne ("Phiz"), who also illustrated most of his subsequent books. He had published the *Sketches by Boz* in two volumes, illustrated by Cruikshank, had written two dramatic pieces that were very successfully produced at the St. James's Theatre, had begun to edit *Bentley's Miscellany*, and was writing *Oliver Twist* for it, before he left Furnival's Inn and established his small household of his wife and their first son and his wife's sister, Mary Hogarth, at 48 Doughty Street, Mecklenburgh Square.

In later years Sala, who became one of Dickens's principal contributors to *Household Words*, used to live in Mecklenburgh Square, and at different times Sidney Smith, Shirley Brooks, and Edmund Yates all lived in Doughty Street (Shirley Brooks was born there, at No. 52), but Doughty Street's chief glory is that for the greater part of three years Dickens was the tenant of No. 48. George Henry Lewes called to see him there, and was perturbed to find that he had nothing on his bookshelves but three-volume novels and presentation copies of books of travel; clearly he was not much of a reader, and had never been a haunter of old bookstalls. But presently Dickens came in, says Lewes, "and his sunny presence quickly dispelled all misgivings. He was then, as to the last, a delightful companion, full of sagacity as well as animal spirits; but I came away more impressed with the fulness of life and energy than with any sense of distinction."

Mrs. Cowden Clarke, who saw him in his Doughty Street days, speaks of him as "genial, bright, lively-spirited, pleasant-toned," and says he "entered into conversation with a grace and charm that made it feel perfectly natural to be chatting and laughing as if we had known each other from childhood." His eyes she describes as "large, dark blue, exquisitely shaped, fringed with magnificently long and thick lashes—they now swam in liquid, limpid suffusion, when tears started into them from a sense of humour or a sense of pathos, and now darted quick flashes of fire when some generous indignation at injustice, or some high-wrought feeling of admiration at magnanimity, or some sudden emotion of interest and excitement touched him. Swift-glancing, appreciative, rapidly observant, truly superb orbits they were, worthy of the other features in his manly, handsome face. The mouth was singularly mobile, full-lipped, well-shaped, and expressive; sensitive, nay restless, in its susceptibility to impressions that swayed him, or sentiment that moved him." Which tallies sufficiently with Carlyle's well-known description of him a few months later: "A fine little fellow, Boz, I think. Clear, blue, intelligent eyes, eyebrows that he arches amazingly; large, protrusive, rather loose mouth, a face of most extreme mobility which he shuttles about—eyebrows, eyes, mouth and all—in a very singular manner while speaking. Surmount this with a loose coil of common-coloured hair, and set it on a small, compact figure, very small, and dressed *à la* D'Orsay rather than well—this is Pickwick. For the rest, a quiet, shrewd-looking little fellow, who seems to guess pretty well what he is and what others are."

Forster sketches his face at this same period with "the quickness, keenness, and practical power, the eager, restless, energetic outlook on each several feature, that seemed to tell so little of a student and writer of books, and so much of a man of action and business in the world. Light and motion flashed from every part of it." "It was as if made of steel," said Mrs. Carlyle; and "What a face is his to meet in a drawing-room," wrote Leigh Hunt. "It has the life and soul in it of fifty human beings."

Dickens's weakness, then and all his life through, was for something too dazzling and ornate in the way of personal adornment. We hear of a green overcoat with red cuffs. "His dress was florid," says one who met him: "a satin cravat of the deepest blue relieved by embroideries, a green waistcoat with gold flowers, a dress coat with a velvet collar and satin facings, opulence of white cuff, rings in excess, made up a rather striking whole." And there is a story of how, when an artist friend of both was presented by somebody with a too gaudy length of material, Wilkie Collins advised him to "Give it to Dickens—he'll make a waistcoat out of it!"

That jest belongs to a later year, but here you have a sufficiently vivid presentment of the man as he was when he could be seen passing in and out of the house in Doughty Street. He may have been dandified in appearance, but in all his other habits he was a hard and severely methodical worker. "His hours and days were spent by rule," we are told. "He rose at a certain time, he retired at another, and though no precisian, it was not often that his arrangements

varied. His hours of writing were between breakfast and luncheon, and when there was any work to be done no temptation was sufficiently strong to cause it to be neglected. This order and regularity followed him through the day. His mind was essentially methodical, and in his long walks, in his recreations, in his labour, he was governed by rules laid down by himself, rules well studied beforehand and rarely departed from."

His rise out of poverty and obscurity into affluence and fame makes a more wonderful story than that of how Byron woke one morning and found himself famous. For Dickens had everything against him. He was indifferently educated, had no social advantages, and no influential friends behind him. In 1835 he was an unknown young author, writing miscellaneous stories and sketches for the papers; by the end of 1836 everybody was reading and raving of and laughing over *Pickwick*, and he was the most talked-of novelist of the hour. "It sprang into a popularity that each part carried higher and higher," says Forster, "until people at this time talked of nothing else, tradesmen recommended their goods by using its name, and its sale, outstripping at a bound that of all the most famous books of the century, had reached an almost fabulous number." Judges, street boys, old and young in every class of life, devoured each month's number directly it appeared, and looked forward impatiently to the next one. Carlyle told Forster that "an archdeacon, with his own venerable lips. repeated to me the other night a strange, profane story of a solemn clergyman who had been administering ghostly consolation to a sick person; having finished,

satisfactorily as he thought, and got out of the room, he heard the sick person ejaculate: 'Well, thank God, *Pickwick* will be out in ten days, any way!'"

Dickens's favourite recreation in those early years was riding, and frequently he would set out with Forster "at eleven in the morning for 'a fifteen mile ride out, ditto in, and lunch on the road,' with a wind-up of six o'clock dinner in Doughty Street." Other times he would send a note round to Forster, who lived at 58 Lincoln's Inn Fields, and if he could be persuaded to come, as generally he could, they would set out for a brisk walk to Hampstead and over the Heath, and have "a red-hot chop for dinner and a glass of good wine" at Jack Straw's Castle.

His daughter Mamie was born in Doughty Street, and there the first great grief of his life completely overwhelmed him for a time, when his wife's young sister, Mary Hogarth, died at the age of seventeen. There are several letters from that address in 1838 concerning his progress with *Oliver Twist*. In one, when he could not work, he says he is "sitting patiently at home waiting for Oliver Twist, who has not yet arrived." In another he writes, "I worked pretty well last night—very well indeed; but although I did eleven close slips before half-past twelve I have four to write to close the chapter; and as I foolishly left them till this morning, have the steam to get up afresh." "Hard at work still," he writes to Forster in August 1838. "Nancy is no more. I showed what I had done to Kate last night, who is in an unspeakable '*state*'; from which and my own impression

I augur well. When I have sent Sykes to the devil I must have yours." And "No, no," he wrote again to Forster next month, "don't, don't let us ride till to-morrow, not having yet disposed of the Jew, who is such an out-and-outer that I don't know what to make of him." Then one evening Forster went to Doughty Street and sat in Dickens's study and talked over the last chapter of *Oliver Twist* with him, and remained reading there whilst he wrote it.

From Doughty Street Dickens and "Phiz" set out together on that journey into Yorkshire to see the notorious school that was to become famous as Squeers's, and in due course there are letters from that street telling of the progress of *Nicholas Nickleby*. Early in 1839 the letters tell of how he is house-hunting, and in the intervals working "at racehorse speed" on *Barnaby Rudge*, and near the end of the year he moved to 1 Devonshire Terrace, at the corner of Marylebone Road.

The Doughty Street house remains as he left it, but 1 Devonshire Terrace has been rather considerably altered. The new residence was such a much more imposing one than the other that absurd rumours got about that he was lapsing into extravagance and living beyond his income, and "I perfectly remember," writes Sala, "when he moved from his modest residence in Doughty Street to a much grander but still not very palatial house in Devonshire Terrace, an old gentleman calling one day upon my mother and telling her, with a grave countenance, that Dickens had pawned his plate, and had been waited upon for the last fortnight by bailiffs in livery." It was about

THURLOE'S LODGINGS.
24 OLD SQUARE LINCOLNS INN.
Fred^k Adcock.

this time, too, that the *Quarterly* made its famous prediction that in the case of work such as Dickens was doing "an ephemeral popularity will be followed by an early oblivion." But there was no ground for any of these fears. His life was a triumphal procession; he went forward from victory to victory. At Devonshire Terrace he wrote most of *Barnaby Rudge*: and the prototype of Grip, Barnaby's raven, the special playmate of Dickens's children, died there; from here he went on his first visit to America, and on his return, with intervals of holiday at Broadstairs, in Cornwall, and in Italy, wrote the *American Notes*, *Martin Chuzzlewit*, *The Chimes*, *The Cricket on the Hearth*, *Pictures from Italy*, *Dombey and Son*, and commenced the writing of *David Copperfield*. Whilst he was here, too, he was for a brief space the first editor of the *Daily News*, and in March 1850 opened his Wellington Street office and started *Household Words*. Incidentally, he was taking an active share in a dozen or more public movements; acting as chairman at meetings and dinners, managing and playing in private theatricals, writing miscellaneous articles for his new magazine, and attending closely to its business organisation. Never was a more strenuous literary worker, or one who brought more enthusiasm to whatever he undertook.

In the autumn of 1851, in the flowing and rising tide of his prosperity, he removed to the now vanished Tavistock House, in Tavistock Square, and in the next six years, before his removal to Gad's Hill, wrote *Bleak House*, *Hard Times*, and *Little Dorrit*, to say nothing of the numerous short stories and articles

he contributed to *Household Words*, and began to give those public readings from his books that were in his last decade to occupy so much of his time, add so enormously to his income and his personal popularity, and play so sinister a part in the breaking down of his health and the shortening of his career.

Writing immediately after Dickens's death, Sala said that twenty years ago the face and form of Sir Robert Peel were familiar to almost everybody who passed him in the street, and " there were as few last week who would have been unable to point out the famous novelist, with his thought-lined face, his grizzled beard, his wondrous searching eyes, his bluff presence and swinging gait as, head aloft, he strode, now through crowded streets, looking seemingly neither to the right nor the left, but of a surety looking at and into everything—now at the myriad aspects of London life, the ever-changing raree-show, the endless roundabout, the infinite kaleidoscope of wealth and pauperism, of happiness and misery, of good and evil in this Babylon—now over the pleasant meads and breezy downs which stretched round his modest Kentish demesne hard by the hoary tower of Rochester. . . . Who had not heard him read, and who had not seen his photographs in the shop windows ? The omnibus conductors knew him, the street boys knew him ; and perhaps the locality where his recognition would have been least frequent—for all that he was a member of the Athenæum Club—was Pall Mall. Elsewhere he would make his appearance in the oddest places, and in the most inclement weather : in Ratcliff Highway, on

Haverstock Hill, on Camberwell Green, in Gray's Inn Lane, in the Wandsworth Road, at Hammersmith Broadway, in Norton Folgate, and at Kensal New Town. . . . His carriage was remarkably upright, his mien almost aggressive in its confidence—a bronzed, weatherworn, hardy man, with somewhat of a seaman's air about him." London folks would draw aside, he continues, "as the great writer—who seemed always to be walking a match against Thought—strode on, and, looking after him, say, 'There goes Charles Dickens!' The towering stature, the snowy locks, the glistening spectacles, the listless, slouching port, as that of a tired giant, of William Makepeace Thackeray were familiar enough likewise but, comparatively speaking, only to a select few. He belonged to Clubland, and was only to be seen sauntering there or in West End squares, or on his road to his beloved Kensington. . . . Thackeray in Houndsditch, Thackeray in Bethnal Green or at Camden Town, would have appeared anomalous . . . but Charles Dickens, when in town, was ubiquitous."

There are statues in London of many smaller men, of many who mean little or nothing in particular to London, but there is none to Dickens, and perhaps he needs none. Little critics may decry him, but it makes no difference, it takes nothing from his immortality. "It is fatuous," as Trollope said of his work, "to condemn that as deficient in art which has been so full of art as to captivate all men." And to the thousands of us who know the people and the world that he created he is still ubiquitous in London here, even though he has his place for ever,

as Swinburne says, among the stars and suns that we behold not :

"Where stars and suns that we behold not burn,
Higher even than here, though highest was here thy place,
Love sees thy spirit laugh and speak and shine
With Shakespeare and the soft bright soul of Sterne,
And Fielding's kindliest might and Goldsmith's grace;
Scarce one more loved or worthier love than thine."

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN'S HOUSE
CRAVEN STREET.
Fred^k Adcock.

CHAPTER XVI

CONCLUSION

When I was writing of what remains to us of the London of Shakespeare, I might have mentioned the four-century-old gateway of Lincoln's Inn, in Chancery Lane, that Ben Jonson helped to build, and close by which, at 24 Old Buildings, Cromwell's secretary, John Thurloe, lived in 1654; and although in my first chapter I gave a fairly lengthy list of famous authors and artists who were Cockneys by birth, I by no means made it so long as I could have done. Hablot K. Browne, otherwise "Phiz," the chief of Dickens's artists, was born in Kennington, and lived for eight years, towards the close of his career, at 99 Ladbroke Grove Road; Lord Lytton, whom Tennyson unkindly described as "the padded man that wears the stays," and who was for a time a more popular novelist than either Dickens or Thackeray, was born at 31 Baker Street, and lived in after years at 12 Grosvenor Square, and at 36 Hertford Street; Gibbon was born at Putney, and lived for some years at 7 Bentinck Street, which he said was "the best house in the world"; John Leech was born over his father's coffee-shop in Ludgate Hill, and lived when he had risen to fame at 32 Brunswick Square, and passed the last years of his life at 6 The Terrace, Kensington; and one who I confess interests

me at least as much as any of these, Douglas Jerrold, was born in Greek Street, Soho, lived as a boy at Broad Court, in the same neighbourhood, and afterwards shifted about into half-a-dozen different parts of London, and died in 1857 at Kilburn Priory, on the skirts of St. John's Wood. West Lodge, his house at Lower Putney Common, still stands much as it was when he occupied it, with his mulberry tree still growing in that garden round which, one memorable summer afternoon, he and Dickens, Forster, Maclise, and Macready gave each other "backs," and played a joyously undignified game of leapfrog. I don't know whether anybody reads *Mrs. Caudle's Curtain Lectures* now, but everybody read them and laughed over them when they were new, and Jerrold's best jokes and witticisms are much too well known to leave me an excuse for repeating any of them here. For all his bitter tongue, he was kind, generous, sensitive, afire with a fine scorn of wrong, injustice, and every variety of social humbug and snobbery. "A small delicately-formed, bent man," is Edmund Yates's recollection of him, "with long grey hair combed back from his forehead, with grey eyes deep-set under penthouse brows, and a way, just as the inspiration seized him, of dangling a double-eyeglass which hung round his neck by a broad black ribbon."

Browning, who was born at Hanover Cottage, Southampton Street, Camberwell, in 1812, lived at De Vere Gardens, and at 19 Warwick Crescent. Removing from 74 Gloucester Place in 1842, Elizabeth Barrett and her autocratic father went to 50 Wimpole Street, and calling there with a friend in 1845, Robert Browning was introduced to her. It was from and

to this house that so many of those wonderful love-letters of theirs were written, and little more than a year after their first meeting, her father stubbornly refusing his consent to their union, she stole out by this sedate and sombre door one autumn morning to join her waiting lover, and they were quietly and clandestinely married at the old church round the corner in Marylebone Road—the same church in which, in the same year, Dickens, then living at Devonshire House and within sight of it, married Mr. Dombey, with Captain Cuttle looking on at the ceremony from the gallery.

At 82 Wimpole Street Wilkie Collins died; and at 67, lived Henry Hallam, the historian, and his son Arthur, the friend of Tennyson, who often visited him there, and has enshrined his memory for ever in his *In Memoriam;* where, too, he pictures this house and this street:

"Dark house, by which once more I stand
Here in the long unlovely street,
Doors, where my heart was used to beat
So quickly, waiting for a hand.

A hand that can be clasped no more—
Behold me, for I cannot sleep,
And like a guilty thing I creep
At earliest morning to the door.

He is not here; but far away
The noise of life begins again,
And ghastly thro' the drizzling rain
On the bald street breaks the blank day."

Theodore Hook, another Cockney, was born in Charlotte Street, Bedford Square; Captain

Marryat, another, in Great George Street, Westminster, and whilst he was writing the most famous

of his books he lived at 8 Duke Street, St. James's, and at Sussex Lodge, in the Fulham Road. Ruskin, who, like Browning, is included in my earlier list of Cockneys,

was born at 54 Hunter Street, and made his home for many years at 163 Denmark Hill, both of which houses still survive him.

Benjamin Franklin lived at Craven Street, Strand; before he rented a house in London after Johnson's death, Boswell had lodgings, on his annual visits to town, in Half Moon Street, Piccadilly, in Conduit Street, Regent Street, and in Old Bond Street; where Sterne dwelt before him and Gibbon after him, and at 27A, Harrison Ainsworth, later than them all; but Ainsworth's more notable residence, where he lived when he was in the full glory of his enormous popularity, is Kensal House, out in the no-longer-rural district of Kensal Green.

At 19 Albert Gate, Sloane Street, lived Charles Reade, who was nearly all his life quarrelling with his critics and fighting against legal injustices with an almost ungovernable fury, and yet David Christie Murray said he was one of the four men he had met who were "distinguished by that splendid urbanity of manner which was once thought to express the acme of high breeding. . . . A beautiful, stately cordiality commonly marked his social manner, but he could be moved to a towering rage by an act of meanness, treachery, or oppression; and in his public correspondence he was sometimes downright vitriolic." Anthony Trollope died at 34 Welbeck Street; and Lord Macaulay at Holly Lodge on Campden Hill. George Cruikshank lived in the queer, dull-looking little house that still remains at 263 Hampstead Road, and from that address put forth his groundless claims to being the originator of Ainsworth's novels, *Jack Sheppard* and *The Miser's Daughter*, and Dickens's

Oliver Twist. Ainsworth was still living, and strenuously denied his assertions; Dickens was dead, but there existed a letter of his about the illustrations to his book that sufficiently proved that the story was not written round Cruickshank's drawings, as the aged artist seemed to have persuaded himself it was. A greater artist than Cruickshank (and another Cockney, by the way) was born in Cumberland Market, near Regent's Park, and died in a sponging-house in Eyre Street Hill, Clerkenwell Road, in 1804. That was George Morland. Two years before his death he went with his wife and put up at the Bull Inn, at Highgate, which was kept by a former acquaintance of his. He is supposed to have utilised as a studio the large room with three bay windows that runs above the bar the full width of the building. He entertained Gainsborough and Romney and other contemporary artists there, but within a few months had had a fierce quarrel with the landlord and returned

CRUIKSHANK
263 HAMPSTEAD ROAD
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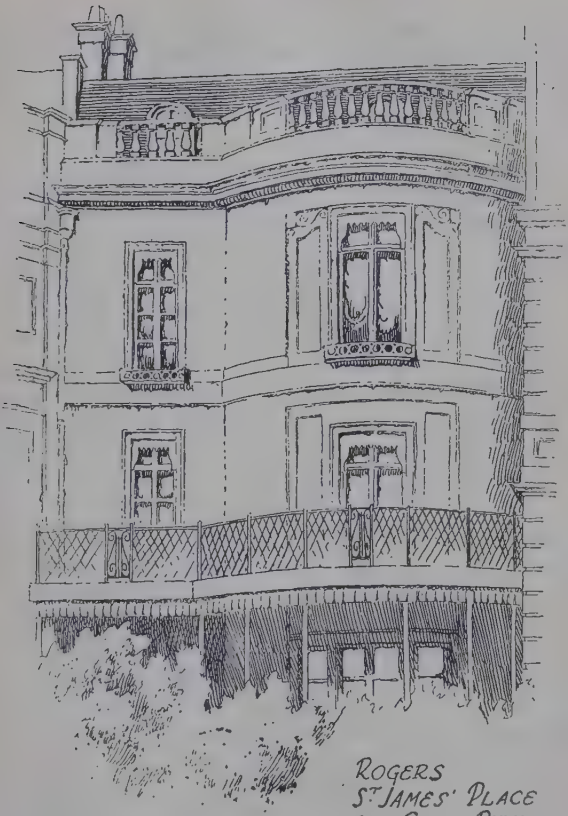
to lodge with his brother in Dean Street, Soho. He was by then showing the effects of his reckless dissipations, and looked "besotted and squalid and cadaverous; hanging cheeks and pinched nose, contracted nostrils, bleared and bloodshot eyes, swelled legs, a palsied hand, and tremulous voice bespeaking the ruin of what had once been the soundest of frames." Drunk or sober, he worked rapidly and with unfailing mastery, but he was generally cheated by those around him of the due reward of his labours. Going on a short holiday to Brighton, he wrote giving his brother this list of what he had drunk in a single day: "Hollands gin, rum and milk — before breakfast. Coffee—for breakfast. Hollands, porter, shrub, ale, Hollands, port wine and ginger, bottled ale—these before dinner. Port wine at dinner. Porter, bottled porter, punch, porter, ale, opium and water. Port wine at supper. Gin, shrub, and rum on going to bed." At the bottom of the list he sketched a tombstone bearing a skull and crossbones, and by way of epitaph: "Here lies a drunken dog." And debts and duns and death in the sponging-house were the inevitable end of it.

Lady Blessington held her brilliant salon at 8 Seamore Place, Mayfair, before in 1836 she removed to the more noted Gore House, Kensington, and welcomed to her splendid drawing-rooms Byron, Lytton, Disraeli, Landor, Marryat, Dickens, Thackeray, Sydney Smith, Maclise, Hook, and all the greatest men of the day in literature, art, politics, and society, till in 1849 she was overwhelmed with financial embarrassments and fled to Paris, where she died the year after. Gore House has vanished from

its place long since, and the Albert Hall more than covers the site of it. But Holland House, which was equally or more celebrated for its magnificent social gatherings in the first half of last century and earlier, still holds its ground. Addison lived there after his marriage to the Countess of Warwick in 1716, and

from his bedroom there, in his last hours, sent for his dissipated stepson in order that he might see "how a Christian can die."

Perhaps more interesting than either of these, from a literary standpoint, is the house of Samuel Rogers, 22 St. James's Place, overlooking the Green Park. You can scarcely open the memoirs of any man of letters of his time, but you may read some



ROGERS
ST. JAMES' PLACE
from GREEN PARK
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account of a breakfast or a dinner at Rogers's. "What a delightful house it is!" says Macaulay. "It looks out on the Green Park just at the most pleasant point. The furniture has been selected with a delicacy of taste quite unique. . . . In the drawing-room the chimney-pieces are carved by Flaxman into the most beautiful Grecian forms. The bookcase is painted by Stothard, in his very best manner, with groups from Chaucer, Shakespeare, and Boccaccio. The pictures are not numerous, but every one is excellent. The most remarkable objects in the dining-room are, I think, a cast of Pope, taken after death by Roubiliac; a noble model in terra-cotta by Michael Angelo, from which he afterwards made one of his finest statues, that of Lorenzo de Medici; and, lastly, a mahogany table on which stands an antique vase. When Chantrey dined with Rogers some time ago he took particular notice of the vase and the table on which it stands, and asked Rogers who made the table. 'A common carpenter,' said Rogers. 'Do you remember the making of it?' said Chantrey. 'Certainly,' said Rogers, in some surprise; 'I was in the room while it was finished with the chisel, and gave the workman directions about placing it.' 'Yes,' said Chantrey, 'I was the carpenter.'" Byron, who was a guest at Holland House and at Lady Blessington's, was a frequent guest at Rogers's table also. It was Rogers who introduced him to Miss Milbanke, the unfortunate lady who was to become his wife; and Byron seems by turns to have admired him, disliked him, and looked upon him with a sort of laughing contempt. "When Sheridan was on his deathbed," he writes, "Rogers aided him with purse and person:

this was particularly kind in Rogers, who always spoke ill of Sheridan (to me, at least); but indeed he does that of everybody. Rogers is the reverse of the line 'The best good man with the worst-natured Muse,' being 'The worst good man with the best-natured Muse.' His Muse being all sentiment and sago, while he himself is a venomous talker. I say 'worst good man,' because he is (perhaps) a good man—at least he does good now and then, as well he may, to purchase himself a shilling's worth of Salvation for his Slanders. They are so *little*, too—small talk, and old womanny; and he is malignant too, and envious."

Rogers had a fine head, a distinguished manner, a bland, silky way of saying the most cutting and cynical things. He was not so much a poet as a banker of a poetical temperament. His poetry will presently be forgotten, but his breakfasts and his dinners will be remembered because he lived to be well over ninety, was a very wealthy man of taste, and had the will and the means to play the generous host to some three generations of the wisest, wittiest, greatest men of his era, and several of them said brighter and better things in his dining and drawing-rooms than he ever wrote in his books. He covered such a long span of time that he could entertain Sheridan, who was born in 1751, and Dickens, who died in 1870. Many of the same glorious company had a meeting-place also until a more recent day at Bath House, Mayfair, where Lady Ashburton, the great friend of the Carlyles, held famous receptions, of which Carlyle himself and the Brookfields have left us reminiscences. And the invaluable Allingham has one or two notes about her in his *Diary;* one dated 5th November 1875, in which he says Carlyle passed

his house "about four to-day. I overtook him in the Fulham Road, and walked with him to Lady Ashburton's door at Knightsbridge. He said, 'Browning in his young days wore a turn-down shirt collar with a ribbon for a necktie, and a green coat. I first met him one evening at Leigh Hunt's, a modest youth, with a good strong face and a head of dark hair. He said little, but what he said was good.'" Possibly the talk fell upon him because Browning was among the guests he was to meet that day at Lady Ashburton's.

William Morris and Burne Jones lived and worked together at 17 Red Lion Square; Steele used to live in Bloomsbury Square, where later Disraeli and his father lived, at No. 5. George Borrow lived at 23 Hereford Square, South Kensington. Berkeley Square has a peculiar attraction for me, less because Horace Walpole had his home at 42, than because Colley Cibber dwelt as a very old man at No. 20. In the same way I am not so much drawn to Gower Street by the fact that in a greatly altered house there Darwin used to live, as I am to that shabby Percy Street, Tottenham Court Road, where Albert Smith had a house at which Sala once visited him. Walpole and Darwin are, of course, incomparably greater men than Cibber and Albert Smith, but these last two have a curious fascination for me. I read Smith's *Christopher Tadpole* and *The Scattergood Family* when I was a boy, and his figure flits elusively in the background of Dickens's reputation, wrapped in a very characteristic mid-Victorian bohemianism, and, without precisely knowing why, I have taken a sort of liking to him. Sala says he was a kind, cheery little man, who when he was at

work at home wore a blue blouse. "I recall him," he says, "as a sturdy-looking, broad-shouldered, short-necked man, with grey eyes and flowing locks of light brown, and large side-whiskers; later in life he wore a beard. His voice was a high treble." His study in Percy Street was littered always with French novels, dolls, pipes, cheap jewellery, cakes of soap made in the image of fruit, minature Swiss châlets, fancy costumes, and such a miscellany of odds and ends that it had the appearance of an old curiosity shop. As for Cibber, I began by feeling contempt for him, because of the scorn Pope pours on him in *The Dunciad*, and the character for dulness that was imposed upon him by that savage satirist and his host of imitators. But when I read some of Cibber's comedies (such as *The Careless Husband*, and *Love Makes a Man*) I found them amusing and clever in their fashion, certainly not dull, and when I dropped one day into the National Portrait Gallery and saw that coloured bust of him under a glass case and leering through the glass eyes that have been fitted into his head—I succumbed, and acquired a sneaking regard for the gay old coxcomb that is not yet beginning to cool. You cannot read his plays and his delightful *Apology* for his Life without getting interested in him; and then if you go and look at that bust you will feel that you know the sly, witty, shrewd, ruddy-visaged, not over clean, furtive, leery old rascal as intimately as if you had been acquainted with him in the flesh.

But if one set out to write of the homes and haunts of these minor celebrities this book would be endless; moreover, many amongst them that have some peculiar attraction for me might have no interest

BORROW'S HOUSE
HEREFORD SQUARE
Fred^k Adcock

for any one else; and many that for special reasons mean a great deal to you might mean nothing at all to me. So, as the wiser course, I have, in the main, limited my survey to the houses of men and women who are considerable enough to be known, more or less, by every one who has even a nodding acquaintance with literature, and to that extent my chronicle is at an end.

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